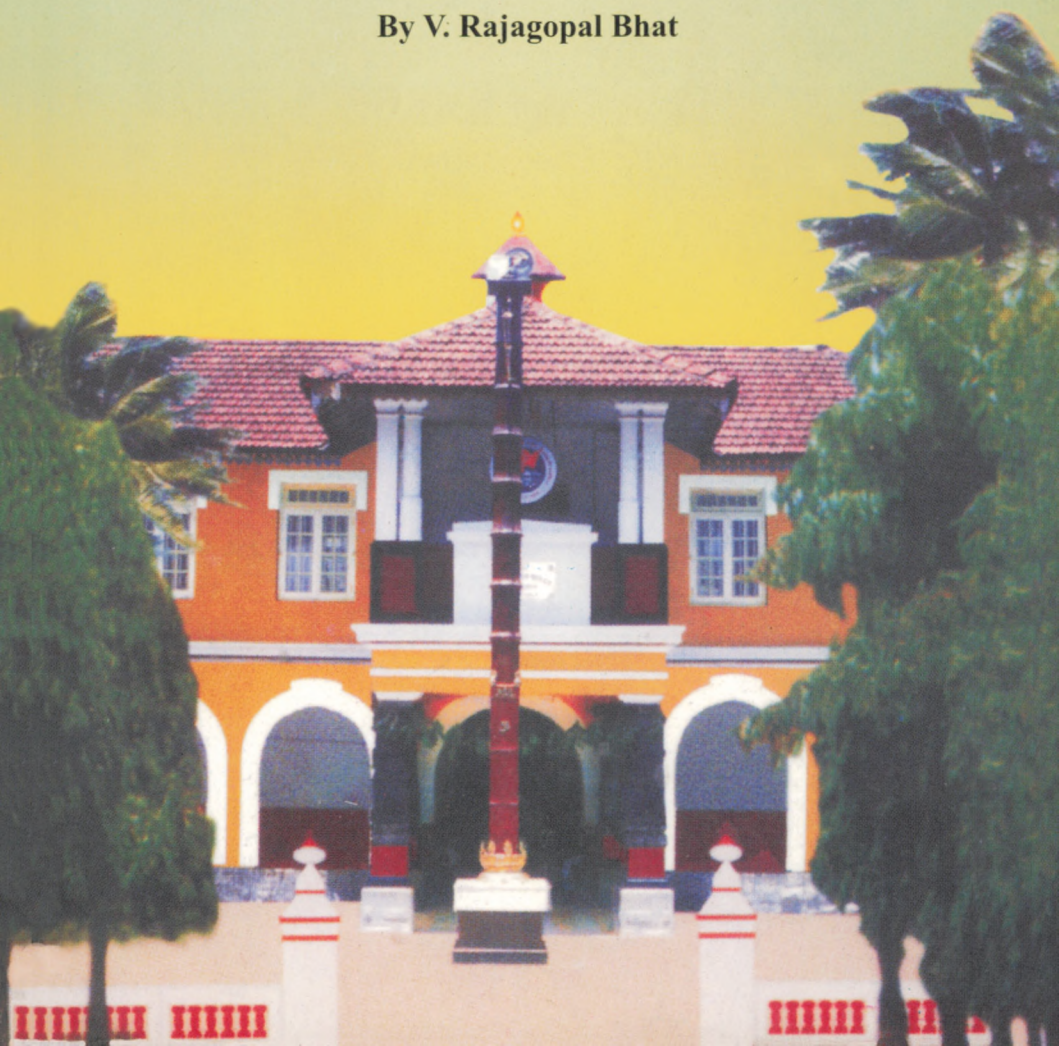


FROM
PÂDA PRAKSHÂLAN
TO
PHALAMANTRÂKSHAT
- A Spiritual Journey

By V. Rajagopal Bhat



॥ श्रीचित्रापुर मठः श्रीवल्ली ॥

॥ प्रार्थना ॥

SABHA COMMENCING PRAYERS

दक्षिणास्यसमारम्भा शङ्कराचार्यमध्यमा ।
अस्मदाचार्यपर्यन्ता स्मर्या गुरुपरम्परा ॥
श्रुतिस्मृतिपुराणानामालयं करुणालयम् ।
नमामि भगवत्पादं शङ्करं लोकशङ्करम् ॥
शङ्करं शङ्कराचार्यं केशवं बादरायणम् ।
सूत्रभाष्यकृतौ वन्दे भगवन्तौ पुनः पुनः ॥
ईश्वरो गुरुरात्मेति मूर्तिभेदविभागिने ।
व्योभवद्व्याप्तदेहाय दक्षिणामूर्तये नमः ॥
परिज्ञानाश्रम श्री गुरुशङ्कर परिज्ञानाश्रम शङ्कर सदगुरु
केशव वामन कृष्ण पाण्डुरङ्ग आनन्द परिज्ञान गुरु
सद्योजात शङ्कर सदगुरु ॥
गुरुर्ब्रह्मा गुरुर्विष्णुः गुरुर्देवो महेश्वरः ।
गुरुः साक्षात् परब्रह्म तस्मै श्री गुरवे नमः ॥
ॐ सह नाववतु । सह नौ भुनक्तु । सह वीर्यं करवावहे ।
तेजस्विनावधीतमस्तु मा विद्विषावहे ।
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

SABHA CONCLUDING PRAYERS

नन्दन्तु साधकाः सर्वे विनश्यन्तु विदूषकाः ।
अवस्था शाम्भवी मेऽस्तु प्रसन्नोऽस्तु गुरुः सदा ॥
सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः सर्वे सन्तु निरामयाः ।
सर्वे भद्राणि पश्यन्तु मा कश्चिद् दुःखमाप्नुयात् ॥
ॐ पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात्पूर्णमुदच्यते ।
पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते ॥
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

FROM
PĀDAPRAKSHĀLANA
TO
PHALAMANTRĀKSHATA
- A Spiritual Journey

By V. Rājagopāl Bhaṭ

Published by:

Shrī Chitrāpur Math

Shirālī Uttar Kaṇṇaḍa,
Kaṇṇāṭaka, Pin 581354.
Iṇḍiā.

Tel.: 91-08385-258368

E-mail: scmath@ricmail.com

Web: www.chitrapurmath.net

First Edition January 2008 1000 Copies
(Sponsored by : Shrī Amit Shrīkar Talgerī & family and
Shrī. Amit Shashāṅk Rāje & family)

Second Edition February 2008 500 Copies
(Sponsored by : Shrī Rāmmohan Gopāl Kalliānpur &
Shrī Chandrashekar Gopāl Kalliānpur)

Third Edition October 2008 1000 Copies
(Sponsored by : Shrī Amit Shrīkar Talgerī & family and
Shrī. Amit Shashāṅk Rāje & family)

All rights reserved

Printed at:

Omkar Impressions

204, Alankar Ind. Estate,
Off Aarey Road,
Goregaon (E),
Mumbai - 400 063.

Tel.: (022) 2879 0747.

Photograph of P. P. Swāmījī, included in this book was taken by Shrī. Kishan Kalliānpur to whom we are thankful.

This third edition is being released on the most auspicious Vijayadashami 2008.

CONTENTS

1. Transliteration Scheme	i
2. Foreword	iii
3. Author's Preface	vi
4. Introduction	1
5. Swāmī Dayyā Pāmpā	3
6. Pūrṇa Kumbha Swāgata and Pāda Prakshālana	6
7. Dhūl Bheṭ	9
8. Phala Samarpaṇa	13
9. Purification Begins	14
10. Mantra Japa - Bhajana	16
11. Pāda Pūjā and Pādukā Pūjā	25
12. Tīrtha Vitarāṇa	33
13. Prasāda	36
14. Bhikshā	42
15. Kshamā Yāchanā	46
16. Āshīrvachana	48
17. Phala Mantrākshata	51
18. Conclusion	56
19. Annexures :	
i. Our Glorious Guru Paramparā	59
ii. Dīpa Namaskāra Stotra	60
iii. Bho Parāk Swāmin Parāk	64
iv. Significance of Aṣṭāvadhāna	66
v. Significance of Chāturmāsya	69

Transliteration Scheme
Shrī Chitrāpur Math Tercentenary Font

Sanskṛta letter	Transliteration Scheme - Lower Case	Transliteration Scheme - Upper Case
अ	a	A
आ	ā	Ā
इ	i	I
ई	ī	Ī
उ	u	U
ऊ	ū	Ū
ऋ	r̄	Ṛ
ॠ	r̄̄	Ṝ
ल	l	l
लृ	l̄	Ḍ
ए	e	E
ऐ	ai	Ai / AI
ओ	o	O
औ	ou	Ou / OU
अं/अम्	m̄	Ṁ
अः	ḥ	Ḥ
क्	c / k	C / K
ख्	kh	Kh / KH
ग्	g	G
घ्	gh	Gh / GH
ङ्	ṅ	Ṇ
च्	ch	Ch
छ्	ch	Ch / CH
ज्	j	J
झ्	jh	Jh / JH
ञ्	ñ	Ñ

Transliteration Scheme
Shrī Chitrāpur Math Tercentenary Font

Sanskṛta letter	Transliteration Scheme - Lower Case	Transliteration Scheme - Upper Case
ट	t	T
ठ	th	Th / TH
ड	ḍ	Ḍ
ढ	dh	Dh / DH
ण	ṇ	Ṇ
त	t	T
थ	th	Th / TH
द	d	D
ध	dh	Dh / DH
न	n	N
प	p	P
फ	ph	Ph / PH
ब	b	B
भ	bh	Bh / BH
म	m	M
य	y	Y
र	r	R
ल	l	L
व	v / w	V / W
श	sh	Sh / SH
ष	sh	Sh / SH
स	s	S
ह	h	H
ळ	l̄	L̄
क्ष	ksh	Ksh / KSH
ऽ	ṣ	Ṣ

FOREWORD

(TO THE FIRST EDITION)

॥ श्री गुरुभ्यो नमः । श्री भवानीशंकराय नमः ॥

To be in the presence of Pūjya Swāmījī is sheer bliss!

His arrival at any place is always an occasion for joy and celebration, eagerly looked forward to. The visit is seen by the devotees as an opportunity to offer *Sevā* at the Holy feet of the Lord Himself in the form of the Guru. A respectful welcome with the *Pūrṇakumbha* and *Pādaprakṣāṇa*, *Dhūlī bheṭ*, *Phalasarpaṇa*, *Pādapūjā*, the *Nityasevās – Mantra japa*, participation in the *Pūjās* performed by the Guru, listening to the *Upadeshas* from Him, receiving *Tīrtha* and *Prasāda*, and finally receiving His blessings in the form of *Āshīrvachana* and *Phalamantrākṣata* – Isn't this nothing but '*Gurupūjana*' in practice? Most of these '*kramās*' are also observed at all our Maths whenever P. P. Swāmījī is there. The devotee basks in the spiritual glow of the Guru, thus cleansing and enriching himself at every step, as he prays,

आचरणे सदैवां ध्याने च वचने तथा
भवानि शिवसङ्कल्पो भवानीशङ्करप्रभो ।
प्रतिष्ठाप्यगुरुञ्चित्ते गुरुकार्येप्रतिष्ठितः
भवानिगुरुसङ्कल्पः प्रणिपातेन सेवया ॥

(Lord Bhavānīshankara, may I always, in my behaviour, thought and speech, be 'Shiva-saṅkalpaḥ'.... that which You want me to be.

Having established my Guru in my consciousness, established in Guru-kārya with surrender and through sevā, may I be 'Guru-saṅkalpaḥ' that which my Guru wants me to be).

Dharmaprachāraka Shri Rājagopāl Bhaṭ, in his articles in the Sunbeam and in his Lectures, has been continuously emphasising the importance of these 'kramās'. It was therefore thought fit that these words of wisdom be compiled in a book form so that it reaches every one.

In this publication, From *Pādaprakṣhālana* to *Phalamantrākṣhata*, Rājagopālmām, as he is affectionately known, has lucidly explained that these *kramas* cease to be mere rituals when we understand the philosophy and meaning behind them. The significance of each of the above activities has been very beautifully elucidated by him in this book. After all, these are a part of the rich traditions handed down to us by our forefathers over the ages, and each one of us *Sādhakas* must know their significance.

The annexure on 'Our Glorious *Guruparamparā*', '*Dīpanamaskāra*', significance of *Aṣṭāvadhāna* and *Chāturmāsa*, is as rich as the main text and adds up to make this book a 'MUST READ' for every devotee.

The publications committee is eternally thankful to Parama Pūjya Swāmījī for His blessings and continuous inspiration.

We thank Shri Amit Shrikar Talgeri and Amit Shashānk Raje and their families for sponsoring this publication, and making it available to Sadhakas at a very nominal rate.

Our thanks go to Shri Ānand Sātwick of Omkar Impressions for the printing, and to Shri Kishan Kallīānpur for the photograph of Pūjya Swāmījī.

A new Font which includes diacritical marks for a transliteration scheme from Devanāgarī to English has been created by Smt. Sheelā Kalāwar. This, 'Shri Chitrāpur Math Tercentenary Font', has been used for the first time, in this publication.

On the august occasion of Datta Jayantī Utsava, 2007, the Publications Committee of the Shri Chitrāpur Math is happy to present this offering - the first Tercentenary

Publication - at the Lotus Feet of Lord Bhavānishaṅkara,
the Guruparamparā and our beloved Gurudeva, His Holiness
Shrīmat Sadyojāta Shaṅkarāshrama Swāmīji.

Shrī Datta Jayantī Utsava
Tālmakiwādī, Mumbai
1st January 2008

Dr. Prakāsh Māvīṅkurve,
Chairman, Publications
Committee

FOREWORD

(TO THE SECOND EDITION)

This second edition in your hands soon after the first edition in December 2007 is a testimony to the warm reception accorded to the book by fellow-devotees. Shri Rammohanmām G. Kalliānpur and Shri Chandrashekharmām G. Kalliānpur have kindly sponsored this second edition in memory of their brother late Shri Ramesh G. Kalliānpur.

We, the Publications Committee, thank them most sincerely for this gesture.

Eleventh Ordination Day of
P. P. Shrimat Sadyojat
Shankarāshram Swāmīji
26th February, 2008

Dr. Prakāsh Māvīṅkurve,
Chairman, Publications
Committee

FOREWORD

(TO THE THIRD EDITION)

Thanks to the overwhelming reception accorded to this book, we are launching its third edition on the auspicious Vijayadashami 2008. The Publications Committee is, indeed, delighted as this is their first publication to spin into three editions within the span of just ten months.

Mumbai
Vijayadashami, 2008

Dr. Prakāsh Māvīṅkurve,
Chairman, Publications
Committee

Author's Preface

(TO THE FIRST EDITION)

After I was appointed as Dharmaprachāraka by our Parama Pūjya Shrīmat Sadyojāta Shaṅkarāshrama Swāmijī, I gave a series of talks at various places on the subject matter of this book. The appreciative listeners suggested that I should bring out a book condensing what I spoke. I am immensely happy that the book is now ready and is slated for release at the august hands of our beloved Sadguru.

To enhance the usefulness of the book, I have filled up blank space by precepts of our past Guruvaryas. I have also added some annexures to make the book more informative.

I take this opportunity to profusely thank Smt. Shrikalā Kodikal for patiently preparing an initial transcript of my manuscript. She transcribes for me P. P. Swamijī's Āshīrvachanas for Sunbeam. Not content with this *shrama-dāna*, she volunteered to help me in preparing this book also. This gracious gesture has helped me a lot. I hope it has kept at bay the printer's devils!

I am also grateful to my friend Shrī Shrīkar Talgerī who evinced keen interest in the book and came up with sponsorship by his son and son-in-law. A big 'Thank you' to him and his near and dear ones.

My thanks to Shrī Ānand Sātwick for printing this book within the deadline.

The Publications Committee headed by Dr. Prakāsh S. Māviṅkurve was also very supportive and I thank all the members most sincerely.

This book is coming to light during the most auspicious Datta Jayantī Utsava and I wish it gets a warm reception.

Wishing all my fellow-devotees a most happy, prosperous and spiritually fulfilling Tercentenary Year, I remain,

Your Dharmaprachāraka
V. Rājagopāl Bhaṭ

Mumbai
Shrī Datta Jayantī Utsava
1st January 2008

PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION

My dear friend, late Shri Ramesh Gopāl Kalliānpur of Goregaon, Mumbai had immensely liked my discourses on the subject matter of this book and had expressed a desire to sponsor a book on this theme. His wish has now been fulfilled by his brothers, Shri Rammohanmām and Shri Chandrashekharmām (Krishnamām) by sponsoring this second edition and I thank them most sincerely.

V. Rājagopāl Bhat
Mumbai
Eleventh Ordination Day of
P. P. Shrimat Sadyojāta Shankarāshram Swāmijī 26th
February, 2008

PREFACE TO THIRD EDITION

A third edition in ten months bears out the usefulness of this book. More and more youngsters – our Yuvadhārā segment – taking part in the ever popular Shībirs are reading this book and hence, this third edition. I feel amply rewarded indeed. My sincerest thanks to my friend Shrī Shrīkar Talgerī for arranging the sponsorship.

V. Rājagopāl Bhat
Mumbai,
Vijayadashami 2008



INTRODUCTION

Āchāra (आचार) and Vichāra (विचार) always go hand in hand. Āchāra stands for what we do and Vichāra explores the why and the wherefore of it. Both make up an integral whole. If we make room for only one in our religious practice — only Āchāra or only Vichāra — we truly miss a lot. Our religious practice should not be partial or lopsided. Like the two wings of a bird, we can soar high only on the wings of both Āchāra and Vichāra.

When our traditional practices and usages were just taking shape, probably everyone knew the rationale (Vichāra) of what he or she was doing. Slowly, however, the understanding took the backseat and one felt complacent about just following the tradition. The sacred books are full of wise counsels that we should understand what we are doing.

Says Lord Kṛṣṇa in Gītā:

श्रेयो हि ज्ञानमभ्यासात् (XII -12)

(“Knowledge about what we are doing like a routine is decidedly superior to mere mechanical performance.”)

Says the Chāndogya Upanishad : यदेव विद्यया करोति श्रद्धया उपनिषदा तदेव वीर्यवत्तरं भवति |

(“Only that which is done with knowledge, faith and introspection becomes more vigorous.”)

There are certain traditional Āchāras associated with our Guru-Shishyavarga relationship. We have been observing them very carefully, trying to follow the footsteps of our elders. It is a spiritually ennobling experience no doubt. However, when understanding (Vichāra) enlivens such observance, it is more enriching, more fulfilling indeed. This book is an humble attempt to shed light on this relationship.



N.B. : Blank space on a page is filled with precepts from our Sadgurus. They don't form a part of the subject matter of the book.

परिज्ञान (प्रथम) बोधामृत

फिरुनी लक्ष चौऱ्यांशीं योनी । येई मनष्य-जन्मालागुनी ।
हा अमोलिक जन्म दिनरजनीं । विषयसुखांत घालूं नये ॥

This human birth will fall to your lot after swinging through eighty four lacs of births in various species. Hence, do not squander away this priceless human birth by wallowing day and night in sensual pleasures.

मी कोण कोठला याचा विचार । करावा मानवे अहोरात्र ।
तरीच होईल तयांचा उद्धार । गुरुकृपेने सहजचि ॥

"Who am I?" and "Whence have I come hither?" - All of you should ponder in this strain day and night. If you persevere in such Self-enquiry, you will be uplifted easily by the grace of the Sadguru.

(Shrī Chitrāpura Guruparamparā Charitra)

SWĀMĪ DAYYĀ PĀMPĀ

(स्वामी दय्या पाम्पा)

These three little words are music to our ears. Everyone amongst us has surely listened to these magic words in his or her childhood. When our parents whispered these words and taught us to bow down to the Guru, it marked our initiation into the burgeoning relationship with the Math and the Guruparamparā. They (these triple words) were enough to somehow make us realize that Swāmī is, indeed, Dayyā (God) and we should offer our Pāmpā, our salutations to Him.

Swāmī or the Guru is, indeed, the Almighty encased in human garb. Shrī Sureshvarāchārya, in his commentary called Mānasollāsa on the hymn to Dakṣiṇamūrti (Dakṣiṇamūrti Stotra by Ādi Shaṅkarāchārya), has the following invocation :

ईश्वरो गुरुरात्मेति मूर्तिभेदविभागिने |
व्योमवत् व्याप्त देहाय दक्षिणामूर्तये नमः ॥

“Obeisance to Dakṣiṇamūrti, who has manifested Himself in three forms as God, Guru, and Ātman and is yet all-pervasive like the sky.” The above invocation is familiar to us and is regularly chanted. It succinctly sums up the truth that Īshvara (God) *descends* as the Guru so that we can *ascend* back to our native status as Ātman.

The Lord is Jagadguru. Don't we say, 'Kṛṣṇaṁ vande Jagadguruṁ'? The human Guru is Lord's facilitator. He comes on the scene and dins into our ears "Know thyself." (आत्मानं विद्धि). We are the pilgrims, the spiritual wayfarers. Īshvara is our port of call, our destination. Guru shows us the way.

Swāmī Vivekānanda calls the Guru as Man-God. He says in His **"In Defence of Hinduism":**

"Will India die? This old Mother of all that is noble or moral, or spiritual, the land which the sages trod, the land in which Godlike men still live and breathe? ... Truly have they said, the tree is known by its fruits. Go under every mango tree in India; pick up bushels of the worm-eaten, unripe, fallen ones from the ground, and write hundreds of the most learned volumes on each one of them – still, you have not described a single mango. Pluck a luscious, full-grown, juicy one from the tree, and now you know all that the mango is. Similarly, these Man-Gods show what the Hindu religion is, its character, power and the possibilities."

The Guru is such a Man-God. Our deference towards the Guru should be like our deference to God Himself. In the words of the Shvetāshvātara Upanishad :

यस्य देवे परा भक्तिः यथा देवे तथा गुरौ |
तस्यैते कथिता ह्यर्थाः प्रकाशन्ते महात्मनः ॥

“The purport of the Mantras of this Upanishad will be clear to that noble soul who has as much devotion to his Guru as towards God.”

So, this equation between God and the Guru is at the heart of our traditional Āchāras.



परिज्ञान (प्रथम) बोधामृत

म्हणोनि तुम्ही करा विचार । निजस्वरूपाचा वारंवार ।
देह मी नव्हे ऐसा निर्धार । धरा निर्मल चित्ताने ॥

Therefore, We urge you all to practise Self-enquiry. "I am not this body" - Cultivate this conviction with resolute determination and an unsullied mind.

मग होईल परम ज्ञान । यामाजीं नसे अनुमान ।
करा निर्मल अंतःकरण । तरीच कार्य साधल ॥

If you do so, you will be vouchsafed the transcendental Knowledge. There is no doubt on this score. First, cleanse your interior, your minds and intellects. Only then, your exertions will be crowned with success.

(Shrī Chitrāpura Guruparamparā Charitra)

शङ्कर (प्रथम) बोधामृत

म्हणोनि हाताने करितां काम । मुखीं धरीं सतत नाम ।
तेव्हां उपजेल खरे प्रेम । भिऊं नको तूं सर्वथा ॥

Let your hands be filled with work, but be forever chanting the Divine Names. Unalloyed love will well up in your hearts. Give no room to any fear.

(Shrī Chitrāpura Guruparamparā Charitra)

PŪRṆA KUMBHA SWĀGATA

(पूर्णकुम्भ स्वागत)

AND

PĀDA PRAKSHĀLANA

(पाद प्रक्षालन)

When we wish to perform a Pūjā, a Kalasha (a pitcher) is a must. The verse chanted at the time of Kalasha Sthāpana hails it as an abode of gods. The Guru is an abode of divine qualities. Like us, He is not an empty vessel. He is a Pūrṇa (full) Kumbha (vessel) overflowing with what Gītā calls as Daivī Sampatti — divine excellences of head and heart. It is, therefore, in the fitness of things that we welcome Him with a Pūrṇa Kumbha. In a Pūjā we welcome the Deity with a Pūrṇa Kalasha. We invoke the Deity (Āvāhana) with appropriate Mantras. Here also we welcome the Guru by chanting benedictory Mantras from the Vedas. Given below are a few illustrative chants from Vishvedeva Sūkta, full of piety and a sincere yearning to be noble in thought, speech and deed. Shrī Sūkta (हिरण्यवर्णाहरिणीम् ...) is also often chanted by Vaidiks.

विश्वेदेवाः सूक्तम् (Rg. Veda I-89)

आ नो भद्राः क्रतवो यन्तु विश्वतोऽदव्यासो अपरीतास उदभिदः |
देवा नो यथा सदभिद वृधे असन्नप्रायुवो रक्षितारो दिवेदिवे ॥१॥

“May auspicious thoughts, resolutions and deeds come to us from every side. May we be never deceived. May we be unhindered and victorious. May the gods ever be with us for our welfare, our guardians, day by day unceasing in their care.”

देवानां भद्रा सुमतिर्ऋजूयतां देवानां रातिरभि नो निवर्तताम् |
देवानां सख्यमुपसेदिमा वयं देवा न आयुः प्रतिरन्तु जीवसे ॥२॥

“May the benign intelligence of the gods be ours, on us may descend the bounty of the righteous gods;

The friendship of the gods have we devoutly sought. May the gods extend our life so we may live long.”

तम् ईशानं जगतस्तस्थुपस् पतिं धियंजिन्वम् अवसे हूमहे वयम् |
पूषा नो यथा वेदसामसद् वृधे रक्षिता पायुरद्वधः स्वस्तये ॥५॥

“Him, the supreme Ruler, the Lord of what moves and what stands still, The Inspirer of the intellect, we invoke for our aid. May the Deity, our Protector and our Guardian, Who is unassailable, promote the increase of our wealth for our well-being.”

भद्रं कर्णेभिः शृणुयाम देवाः भद्रं पश्येमाक्षभिर्यजत्राः |
स्थिरैरङ्गैस्तुष्टुवांसस्तनूभिर्व्यशेम देवहितं यदायुः ॥८॥

“Gods! May we, with our ears, listen to what is good, and O Holy Ones! With our eyes see what is good; And may we, with firm limbs and bodies, offering songs of praise to you, enjoy the divinely

ordained term of life.

We offer Pādya to the deity to wash the Feet. Here, too, we offer Pādya to the Guru. We wash His Feet (Pāda Prakṣhālana) and sprinkle the water on one and all as a great purifier.

We refer to the Feet of the Guru as Lotus Feet. Lotus is a symbol of *alīptatā* (being untouched and unstained). It is untouched by mud or water. The feet of the wandering (*parivrājaka*) Guru take Him everywhere. He reaches out to the wayward and the fallen ones in particular. He remains untouched or unstained by such contact.

We refer to a Mahātmā as a Bhagavatpāda. His Feet (*pāda*) always tend in the direction of Bhagavān, the Almighty. His mission, too, is simple: to ensure that our feet, too, move in the direction of God.



शङ्कर (प्रथम) बोधामृत

मुख्य परमात्म्यावरी घरावे प्रेम । तरीच साधेल आपुले काम ।
प्रेमावांचुनी कैचाही नेम । न येचि उपयोगाते पै ॥

The first and foremost requirement is that you should cultivate love for the Lord. Only then, the other spiritual exertions will bear fruit. For, without love, no discipline will be of any avail.

(*Shri Chitrāpura Guruparamparā Charitra*)

DHŪL BHEṬ – *ITS SIGNIFICANCE*

We are all familiar with the word: Dhūl bheṭ. Soon upon arrival at a holy shrine, it is customary for us to perform Dhūl bheṭ. We do it whenever we visit Shrī Chitrāpur Math, Shirālī, the other Samādhi Maths or the various shrines of our Kuladeva/Kuladevatā in Goā, Aṅkolā, etc. When our beloved Sadguru visits various suburbs in Mumbai in the course of His official tour, devotees in each camp are requested to line up for Dhūl bheṭ. Unmindful of our slovenly appearance and the generous dose of dust that has settled on us during our journey, we hasten to have the *darshana* of the deity or the Guru. In the normal course, we are more careful. We just don't barge into the shrine in a casual way, but Dhūl bheṭ affords us an amnesty of sorts. Bath, prescribed dress code, holy insignia like Vibhūti — all this ceremonial decorum is waived and we present ourselves before the deity or the Guru *as we are*, in our native unadorned condition. What does this signify?

Dhūl (dust) here is figurative. It is a metaphor for our flawed moral and spiritual condition. But, the All-Merciful God and the Guru will make light of all our faults and foibles, all the dreary dust settled on our souls, if only we fulfill one condition, viz., our loving surrender at their Lotus

Feet. Yashodā caressed the toddler Kṛṣṇa even when He was grey with dust (*dhūlī dhūśara*). So does every mother. The sky is not stained by dust. So is God and the Guru. Our ‘dust’ does not stain the God and the Guru. God is beyond dust (*para rajas*, as the last *pāda* of the four-footed Gāyatrī, Chatuspadi Gāyatrī puts it).

Lord Kṛṣṇa says in Gītā:

अपि चेत्सुदुराचारो भजते मामन्यभाक् |
 साधुरेव स मन्तव्यः सम्यग् व्यवसितो हि सः ||
 क्षिप्रं भवति धर्मात्मा शश्वच्छान्तिं निगच्छति |
 कौन्तेय प्रतिजानीहि न मे भक्तः प्रणश्यति ||

“Even a confirmed sinner, if he worships Me with unwavering faith and devotion, must verily be considered as righteous; for, he has indeed taken the right resolve. (IX-30)

Soon he will become righteous and attain everlasting peace. No devotee of mine will ever perish. You may swear to this effect, O Arjuna.” (IX-31)

In his Ānandalahari, the venerable Ādi Shaṅkarāchārya pours out his heart :

अयः स्पर्शं लग्नं सपदिलभते हेमपदवीं
 यथा रथ्यापाथः शुचिभवति गंगौघमिलितम् |
 तथा तत् तत् पापैरतिमलिनमन्तर्मम यदि
 त्वयि प्रेम्णासक्तं कथमिव न जायेत विमलम् ||

“The iron turns at once into gold when touched by the Philosopher’s Stone. The drainage water turns pure when mingled with the swirling currents of Ganges.

Similarly, will not my heart, impure though it is due to a multitude of sins, become pure and unsullied when planted firmly in Thee with unalloyed love?”

There are innumerable specks of dust settled on each one of us. We are all susceptible to these dark spots. Some of them are:

6 inner foes (*ari- śhaḍvarga*) of Kāma (Lust), Krodha (Anger), Lobha (Greed), Moha (Delusion), Mada (Pride), Matsara (Envy).

8 Anchors of arrogance (*aśṭa mada*) Beauty, youth, lineage, status, strength, wealth, power and learning.

Rajoguṇa and Tamoguṇa in excess.

When we pay a visit (*bhet*) to a shrine and present ourselves before the deity or the Guru, the above specks of dust (*dhūlī*) are there, splattered all over our souls. They make us a derelict son (*kuputra*) no doubt, but, for that reason God or the Guru does not turn us away. We are beneficiaries of His Motherly Compassion. Has not Ādi Shaṅkarāchārya said in his Devyaparādha Kṣhamāpana Stotra : “A wayward son there may be, but never a wayward mother.” (कुपुत्रो जायेत क्वचिदपि कुमाता न भवति).

So, when we perform Dhūl bheṭ, let us mind our Bhāva. Our moral and spiritual inadequacy will pale into insignificance in the eyes of the Compassionate God and the Guru, if we have devotion, diligence and dedication. *Then and only then*, the dust, the warts and the freckles, will count for nothing and only our *bhakti, shradhā* and *vishvāsa*, will waft us across, to the Lotus Feet of God and the Guru.



परिज्ञान (द्वितीय) बोधामृत

धरितां दृढभाव तथा चरणों । तोचि उध्दरील तुजलागोनी ।
काया आणि मन वाणी । लाविं भजनों तथाच्या ॥

If you cultivate this steady devotion, He will certainly rush to your rescue. You should press in the service of the Lord your triple possessions - body, mind and speech.

ऐसे करितां रात्रंदिन । तोचिं करी तुझे रक्षण ।
यामाजीं न करों अनुमान । ठेवीं विश्वास मम वचनीं ॥

If you do so day and night, He will be your saviour.
Harbour no doubt on this score. Repose trust in Our words.

(*Shrī Chitrāpura Guruparamparā Charitra*)

PHALA SAMARPAᅇA

When the devotees seek Dhūī bheᅇ, each one should present a Phala (fruit), mostly coconut, to the Guru. The tuft of the coconut should be pointing towards the Guru. It signifies, “I am totally in Thy Hands. मगलि शेंडि तुगले हात्तांतुं आस्स .” When we receive the coconut from the Guru, the tuft would be pointing towards us. Now-a-days however, devotees are many in numbers. So a collective (सामूहिक) Phala Samarpaᅇa takes place. The coconuts are placed on a large plate. We touch the coconuts and bow down to the Guru. At that time, the priest in attendance recites a verse :

इदं फलं मया देव स्थापितं पुरतस्तव |
तेन मे सफलावाप्तिर्भवेत् जन्मनि जन्मनि ॥

The verse means : “ This fruit has been placed by me before Thee. Please bless me so that I become fruitful in every life.” When all the four objectives (Puruᅇhārtha) – Dharma, Artha, Kāma and Mokᅇha – are fulfilled in one life span, it can be said to be fruitful.

The same verse, given above, is also chanted when we do Phala Samarpaᅇa to a Deity in a Shrine.

The three eyes of the coconut are like the three eyes of Lord Shiva. No other fruit has this unique feature. Hence, coconut is auspicious. It is called as Shrī-Phala.



PURIFICATION BEGINS

When a patient pays a visit (bheṭ) to a doctor with all his symptoms, his presence is registered and the treatment at once begins. The Sadguru is the physician of our soul. We are now in the vicious grip of the malady called birth and death syndrome (पुनरपि जननं पुनरपि मरणम्). It is the handiwork of the dust (dhūli) vitiating our soul. The Guru is extolled in our sacred books as the Bhava-roga-vaidya. He is a Vaidya (physician) and if we submit to His treatment and strictly follow the regimen prescribed by Him, we will leap out of the loop of the birth and death cycle (bhavaroga). Our Dhūl bheṭ registers our presence with Guru and marks the beginning of our treatment at His august hands. Whatever takes place under the benign watchfulness of the Guru in His camp whenever He visits us is with one purpose in view — to rid us of the Dhūl (dust) settled on the various layers of our personality. How does this happen?

Let us take a typical day in Swāmījī's camp whenever He is in our midst. After Suprabhāta, we have physical exercises. This is the first rung of the ladder. It tones up our gross physical body, our Annamaya Kosha. Our physical body subsists on food (anna). Hence it is called the Annamaya Kosha (the sheath nourished by food). We then have someone to teach us breathing exercises

(Prāṇāyāma). These tone up our Vital Sheath (Prāṇāmaya Kosha). Unless these two sheaths are toned up and fine-tuned, we will not be able to really make most of the sumptuous fare that awaits us for the uplift of our mind, intellect and imagination. Nāmasmaraṇa, Bhajanas and Japa purify the mind (Manomaya Kosha). Swādhyāya purifies the intellect (Vijñānamaya Kosha). Dhyāna purifies our imagination (Ānandamaya Kosha). So also the different Pūjanas— Shiva, Devī and Guru—Vimarsha and Parāmarsha (open house) sessions also act as tonic to our inquisitive intellect.



परिज्ञान (द्वितीय) बोधामृत

जगीं जें जें दिसे सर्व । ते ते नश्वर रूप-नांव ।
म्हणोनि धरावा दृढभाव । प्रभुचरणीं सदा तो ॥

The passing parade of names and forms that you witness in this world is transient and fleeting. Therefore, cherish unwavering devotion for the Lotus Feet of the Lord.

नलगे सोडावे प्रपंचकाज । करीं निष्काम चित्तानें सहज ।
धरोनि अंतरीं प्रभुराज । करीं व्यवहार निघरिं ॥

It is not necessary for you to give up the daily chores of life. Be in the world, but discharge your duties with a heart devoid of desire. Seat the Lord within you and then go about attending to your duties in the world.

(Shrī Chitrāpura Guruparamparā Charitra)

MANTRA JAPA — BHAJANA

Japa is the repetition of a set of letters or even a syllable like Om̐ (जपः स्यादक्षरावृत्तिः). Mantra is a mystic chant on whose meaning we need to do *manana* (reflection). The Mantra protects us (*trāyate*) as we reflect on it (*manana*), absorb it and make it a part of our very being. Japa rescues us from *janma-mṛtyu* (ज) *paramparā* (प). Japa can be of only a Name (of God) in which case it is *Nāma-Japa*. When the Japa is of a mystic phrase, it is *Mantra Japa*.

Japa is three-fold. When it is loud and audible, it is *Vāchika* (वाचिक). When it is a whisper or a gentle mutter, it is *Upāṁshu* (उपांशु). When it is purely a mental act, performed silently, it is *Mānasa* (मानस). Each succeeding variety is considered more potent and effective than the preceding. Thus, the mental Japa scores the highest.

The ancient teachers have extolled the practice of keeping count of the Japa. Rosaries therefore, are used. They may have 108, 54 or 27 beads. Speaking about *Gāyatrī*, the sages say that to repeat the Mantra 1000 times is *uttama* (best). 100 times is *madhyama* (middling) and 10 times is *avara* (lowest in merit).

Mantra should be pronounced properly. We have to ensure that both the vowels (*svara*) and

the consonants (varṇa) are properly pronounced. Mutilation of a Mantra due to faulty pronunciation is severely denounced (मन्त्रो हीनः स्वरतो वर्णतो वा मिथ्याप्रयुक्तो न तमर्थमाह).

Paṇini, in a very memorable verse in his Shikṣhā, tells us how we have to handle the text gently:

व्याघ्री यथा हरेत्पुत्रान् दंष्ट्राभ्यां च न पीडयेत् |
भीता पतनभेदाभ्यां तद्वत् वर्णान् प्रयोजयेत् ॥

(A tigress moves its brood from one place to the other, holding it gently by its jaws, taking care that its teeth cause no pain, being also afraid that the cub may fall down and get hurt. With the same gentleness and concern one should utter the letters.)

Japa is a divine act and deserves to be done with due dignity and decorum. One should not be very casual about it. To say that I do the Japa while bathing or dressing up and not being properly seated, is to dilute the importance of this powerful tool in the armoury of Sādhaka. Of all the sacrifices, Japa is the best Yajña and Lord Kṛṣṇa calls it one of His special manifestations (vibhūti) (यज्ञानां जपयज्ञोऽस्मि – Gita X-25). Unlike other sacrifices which call for men, money and materials, this Japa Yajña is easy of accomplishment.

In times of illness, disability, Hoḷey and Sūtaka, one is enjoined upon to do the Japa 28,

10 or at least 8 times. One should not interrupt this short spell of Japa to talk to someone or to pause for any reason :

दशावत्सु जपेत् देवीं अष्टाविंशतिमष्टवा |
न चान्तरा व्याहरेत् न विरमेत् वा कदाचन ||

A text tells us what we should not do while we are seated and are doing the Japa :

“Clearing the throat to spit, yawning, anger, sleepiness, disinclination to do the Japa, reclining against a support (like a wall), laughter, looking here and there, talking — these are the enemies of Japa (जपवैरिणः).”

The following factors enrich Japa and enable the Sādhaka to get the best out of this superb, yet easy means of God-Realization.

मनःप्रहर्षणं शौचं मौनं मन्त्रार्थचिन्तनम् |
अव्यग्रत्वमनिर्वेदः जपसंपत्तिहेतवः ||

“A cheerful disposition, overall cleanliness, silence, reflection on the meaning of the mantra, being free from agitation (due to anger, sensuous thoughts, etc.) and enthusiasm (i.e., doing the Japa spontaneously and joyously rather than out of compulsion or with a sense of weariness) — these bring about enrichment of Japa.”

In Japa there ought to be smaraṇa (remembrance) of not only the Name (नाम), but also the Named (नामी) i.e. God. Japa, therefore,

includes Smaraṇa. Smaraṇa is the essence, the heart of the Japa without which it will be a soulless exercise, without the sap of love. When we utter the Name just once or twice, it is Nāma-Smaraṇa. When the Name is repeated continuously, it becomes Nāma-Japa.

In addition to regular Japa done while seated and bearing in mind the enriching as well as the diluting factors listed above, if we constantly revolve the Name or the Mantra even while attending to our mundane concerns, so much the better. That way, we will be able to make our *bhajana* (devotional service) *nitya* as well as *satata* (daily and continuous) as envisaged in Gītā. What the scriptures disapprove is our not doing the Japa in a proper manner being seated, and our tendency to brazenly explain away our inaction by saying that we did our Japa while bathing etc. Yes, sometimes some saints and Āchāryas may tell intensely worldly people (in an attempt to coax and cajole them to slowly turn spiritual) that they may at least make a beginning by chanting a mantra or divine Name while taking a bath. This is in keeping with the maxim (which Swāmī Ānandāshrama was fond of) that “Doing imperfectly is better than not doing at all.” (अकर्णात् मंदकरणं श्रेयः).

When we consciously do Nāma-japa or Mantra-japa for a certain duration and stop, a curious thing

takes place : though our conscious Japa has ceased, the mind is playing the refrain on its own even without our conscious participation. This is not an unusual phenomenon to which only a select few are privy. All those who have put in a little stint of Japa can vouch for this observation. Japa goes on even without our doing it consciously. This is अजपजप (in one of the connotations of this term). When there is a blackout, the inverter takes over, and when the electricity supply is resumed the inverter goes off. Same is the case with our mind too. The more intense our conscious Japa, the longer will be the spell of the involuntary Japa. So, in the case of Masters, the involuntary Japa goes on even when they are asleep or otherwise occupied. Kabīr says in one of his couplets that now it matters little to him whether the Japa-mālā (rosary) is turned or not. He says that Rāma is taking care of the Japa and he himself is taking it easy, seated in a mood of utter relaxation (राम हमारा जप करे हम बैठे आराम). Shri Gondavālekar Mahārāja used to jocularly tell many to keep their ears close to any part of his body and listen to the Rāma-Nāma Japa ticking away ceaselessly within. Playing on the word in its Marāthī connotation, he would say that Japa protects (जप जपते) you, cherish it carefully (जपून ठेवा) and be alert and vigilant (जपून राहा).

To begin with, one must keep count of the Japa with the help of the rosary. However as pointed out by saints, what matters is not the

lakhs (lakṣha), but whether your lakṣhya (aim, goal) is to merge in the alakṣha (invisible, unmanifest God). We have to surpass the calculating mind and attain अमनीभाव (rising above the mind). If one is all the time conscious of numbers, this अमनीभाव will prove elusive. In Nāma-japa or Mantra-japa, we strive to lose ourselves or forget ourselves. Too much preoccupation with numbers will have the opposite effect.

In His Rathotsava Āshīrvachana of 1998, our revered Shrīmat Sadyojāta Shaṅkarāshrama Swāmijī said : “Next is Samādarāḥ — profound regard and respect for the Anuśthāna you are doing. You should not divulge to others the mantras you have been initiated into. Mantra imparted to you is sacred. You should cherish it like a treasure. If you have some precious possession, some secret treasure, will you go to the market-place and hold up your treasure for one and all to see? If you make a public display, then you make it vulgar and cheap. Your attitude towards your Mantra should be likewise.”

Phala — *karmaphala* — is unavoidable. There’s no getting away from it. As we sow, so we reap. But, the Guru imparts to us the sovereign secret as to how we can confront this *phala*, how we can take this *phala* in our stride, without being *kṣata* or adversely affected

(akṣhata). The Guru, the saints, tell us how we can face the *karmaphala* squarely and boldly. Bend though we may, break, we will not. How do we accomplish this? The answer is Mantra. Divine Name is the armour which protects us from the slings and the arrows of misfortune. Not that misfortunes or hardships will not trail behind us. They will, certainly, but we will not be daunted because Mantra will turn them into damp squibs. We will emerge unscathed (akṣhata) psychologically.

It is not enough if we are initiated into Mantra-dīkṣhā. The dīkṣhā is a sacred covenant between us and the Guru, between us and the Lord. It is a sacred commitment, not to be trifled with. In this context, I cannot help recalling the sad words of Holy Mother Shāradā Devī, the divine consort of Shrī Rāmakṛṣṇa from the book entitled “The Gospel of the Holy Mother”:

“Once when she was badly ill, a disciple noticed her getting up at 2 a.m. So, he asked her whether she was not sleeping well. Her reply was, “How can I, my child? All these children come to me with much earnestness and take initiation, but most of them do not practice Japa regularly. Why regularly? They do not do anything at all. But, since I have taken their responsibility, should I not see to their welfare? Therefore, I do Japa for their sake and pray to

the Master constantly, saying, “Oh Lord! Awaken their consciousness. Give them liberation. There is a great deal of suffering in the world. May they not be born again!”

We read again on page 408 of this book : “Towards the end, the Holy Mother became so weak that she could not sit for long. But, I noticed that she would be doing Japa even while lying down. Sometimes (at Jayarāmabāṭī) I had to wake her up at one or two at night in connection with some work or the other. She would respond at the first call. When I enquired if she did not sleep, she would say, “... I have taken up their burden, should I not look after them? And so I do Japa for them ... with so much earnestness they take initiation. But why then are they not practising anything? Is it so difficult to do so? With a little practice, one gets such joy! Ah, with what bliss Yogin-Mā and I used to do Japa for long hours at Brindāvana! Mosquitoes would cause eruptions on our faces, but we were unaware of it all.”

There is food for thought for all of us in these references. On the same page we read: One day the Holy Mother said, “However much of Japa you do, however much of work you perform, if Mahāmāyā does not open the way, is anything possible for anyone? Oh bound soul! Surrender, surrender. Then alone will She take compassion

on you and leave your path open.”

In short, along with our Japa we should practice surrender, reciting aloud :

अन्यथा शरणं नास्ति त्वमेव शरणं मम ।
 तस्मात्कारुण्यभावेन रक्ष रक्ष महेश्वर ॥ (OR महेश्वरि)
 रक्ष रक्ष महेश्वर रक्ष रक्ष महेश्वर ॥

(There is no other refuge. Thou art alone my refuge. Therefore, take pity on me, O Lord, and protect me, protect me).

Japa and Sharaṇāgati - this is the infallible recipe for spiritual success.

In His recent Āshīrvachana at Mallāpur on 25-9-2007, P. P. Swāmījī said : “Whatever Mantras that you are going to use, you better understand the meaning. Meditate on those Mantras... trying to do both अर्थानुसन्धान and श्रद्धापूर्वक repetition at the same time.”

As we all know, our beloved Swāmījī invariably rounds up His Āshīrvachana, Swādhyāya or other interactive sessions with a Bhajana. Bhajana is a most potent wiper of the Dust (dhūlī) embedded in our mind. In the words of Lord Chaitanya, it is “a cleanser of the mirror of the mind.” (चेतो दर्पण मार्जनम्).



*THE SYMBOLISM
OF
PĀDA PŪJĀ
AND
PĀDUKĀ PŪJĀ*

Muṇḍakopaniṣhad tells us why we should adore an Enlightened One. Says the Mantra :

यं यं लोकं मनसा संविभाति
विशुद्धसत्त्वः कामयते याञ्च कामान् |
तं तं लोकं जयते तान् च कामान्
तस्मादात्मज्ञं ह्यर्चयेद् भूतिकामः ॥

“Whatever a man of purified nature desires, whatever objects he sets his heart upon he obtains them. Therefore one who desires prosperity should worship the Self-realized One.” (3-1-10)

Ādi Shaṅkara comments : “one should worship by washing the feet, by service, by salutations, etc.” (पूजयेत् पादप्रक्षालनं शुश्रूषा नमस्कारादिभिः).

The concluding Mantra of Prashṇopaniṣhad describes the grateful disciples worshipping their Āchārya. Ādi Shaṅkara comments: “Worship here means that they offered flowers to the feet of the Āchārya and bowed down their heads in prostration.” (अर्चयन्तः पूजयन्तः पादयोः पुष्पाञ्जलि प्रकिरणेन प्रणिपातेन च शिरसा).

These two references go to show that Pāda-pūjā has been part of our religious tradition from the days of yore.

The sacred feet of the saint are divine. We see the footprints of God everywhere, but, pray where are His Feet? They have as if merged into the feet of the saint. That's why the saint is called Bhagavatpāda. If we learn to walk in his footsteps, we attain God, the Bhagavān.

Following Mantra is chanted during Pāda-pūjā:

चरणं पवित्रं विततं पुराणं येन पूतः तरति दुष्कृतानि |
तेन पवित्रेण शुद्धेन पूता अति पाप्मानमरातिं तरेम ॥

“He, who has been sanctified by the ancient, wide-spread holy feet of God, crosses over evil deeds and their effects. Rendered holy by those naturally pure and purifying feet of the Lord, may we overcome our sinful propensities, which are our true enemies.”

The Feet of Nārāyaṇa, the Ancient One, are wide enough to encompass the heaven and the earth. Symbolically, the saint's feet represent the God's Feet—Bhagavatpāda.

The Sanyāsī Guru is a Parivrājaka. Parivrājaka is one who goes (वाजकः) round and round (परितो). Going round and round is not a feat in itself to be lauded. When we go around, we

are motivated by Artha and Kāma – monetary considerations and the desire to acquire the necessities and luxuries of life. But, when the Sanyasī Guru moves around, it is to inspire us to imbibe the eternal values of Dharma and Mokṣha. Dharma, Artha, Kāma and Mokṣha are called the four Puruṣhārthas of a human being, four primary objectives of life. Dharma (a righteous way of life) is the foundation. Mokṣha (liberation from the wheel of suffering) is the crowning glory. We, lesser mortals, set our sights only on Artha and Kāma. The Guru becomes Parivrājaka to arouse us from our fatal slumber. Hence our unceasing adulation of His untiring feet.

When the root of a plant, say Tulasī, is watered, the entire plant is taken care of. Likewise, when the Feet of a Mahātmā are worshipped it is as if his entire personality is propitiated.

There is another reason for adoring the feet of a Mahātmā. Although we all agree upon the presence of God, opinions differ as to His location. Some point their index finger upwards and say He is there. Some point out their heart and say God is here. Some say He is everywhere. Opinions differ also about the inter-relationship between God, individual souls and Nature. Some swear by Advaita, some by Dvaita and some by Vishiṣṭādvaita etc. In these circumstances how

should an absolute novice in Sādhanā go about? Says a celebrated verse from the Vana Parva of the Mahābhārata:

वेदा विभिन्नाः स्मृतयो विभिन्ना नैको मुनिर्यस्य मतं न भिन्नम् ।
धर्मस्य तत्त्वं निहितं गुहायां महाजनो येन गतः स पन्थाः ॥

“Vedas and Smṛtis differ in their opinions. There is no sage who does not differ with others. The essence of Dharma is indeed a mystery and hard to understand. Therefore that alone is the path for us on which the Noble One walks.” The Guru is a Mahājana and His Feet light up our path.

The water used for washing the saint’s feet is not to be looked down upon as mere water. It has immense potency and power. The Mantras are :

इमा आपः शिवतमा इमा सर्वस्य भेषजीः ।
इमा राष्ट्रस्य वर्धनी इमा राष्ट्रभृतोऽमृताः ॥

“These waters are most auspicious. They constitute a universal panacea. They are nourishers of the nation. Nectarine, they hold the nation together.”

ॐ अस्मिन् राष्ट्रे श्रियमावेशयामि अतो देवी प्रतिपश्यामि आपः . दक्षिणं पादमवने निजेऽस्मिन् राष्ट्र इन्द्रियं दधामि . सव्यं पादमवने निजेऽस्मिन् राष्ट्र इन्द्रियं वर्धयामि . पूर्वमन्यमपरमन्यं पादावने निजे . राष्ट्रस्य सुप्त्या अभयस्य अवरोधात् . आपः पादावने जनीद्विषन्तं निर्दमहन्तु मे .

“I am breathing prosperity into this nation and

so, I wait upon these waters. This right foot is my true protector and I place the strength of my nation in it. The left foot, too, is my saviour and I foster in it the strength of my nation. First this foot, then the other – both are my true protectors. When the nation sleeps, fear takes over. May these two feet (of the saint) burn up the enemies of my nation.”

The sceptic may wonder why so much adulation be lavished on the mere feet of the saint and what these feet have to do with the strength and the security of the nation.

The answer is : Charaṇa (feet) stands for Ācharaṇa – a way of life. Mighty, indeed, is the responsibility that rests on the tiny feet of the saint. He is the shining exemplar of a noble way of life. He is a role model for aspiring lesser mortals.

His Feet are the cynosures of all eyes. God forbid if they fumble and falter. When His feet go astray, it makes for insecurity and uneasiness all over. Not just the community, the nation trembles too.

In the Rāmāyaṇa we read that Bharata reverentially placed Rāma’s Pādukās (Sandals) on the throne and ruled the Kingdom of Ayodhyā. The Pādukās served as Rāma’s proxy. Whether it is the Feet (*Charaṇa*) of the Saint or his sandals (Pādukās), they are symbolic of the

saint and his godly way of life (*Ācharaṇa*). Like Bharata, we should also rule our little 'Kingdom' (our home, office, business etc.) enshrining the Lotus Feet of our Master in our hearts. Saint Nāmadeva said "O Lord of Paṇḍharpura, I shall not give up Thy Feet under any circumstances. "(चरण न सोडी सर्वथा आण तुझी पंढरीनाथा)". We should be like Nāmadeva.

In a memorable verse of Gītā, Lord Kṛṣṇa says :

यद्यदाचरति श्रेष्ठः तत्तदेवेतरो जनः |
स यत्प्रमाणं कुरुते लोकस्तदनुवर्तते ||

"Whatsoever a great man does, the same is done by others as well. Whatever standards he sets, the world just follows." (3-21).

The Guru is hailed as Parama Haṁsa Parivrājaka Āchārya. A Swan (Haṁsa) is credited by poets with the uncanny ability to imbibe only milk and reject water from a mixture of milk and water. An enlightened soul is a Haṁsa because he can discriminate between the real and the unreal, the good (Shreyas) and the pleasant (Preyas). The Guru is the best among such swans. He is, therefore, a Parama Haṁsa. We have already seen what Parivrājaka means. Who is an Āchārya? He is defined as under :

आचिनोति च शास्त्रार्थान् आचारे स्थापयत्यपि |
स्वयमाचरते यस्तु आचार्यः स प्रकीर्तितः ||

“He is an Āchārya who garners the sum and the substance of the Scriptures, lays down the modalities of putting the teachings into practice and what is more, sets a shining example by His own practice.”

The saint is the path-maker. He blazes the trail that we merely follow. He sees the light shining on the mountain top while His flock sleeps in the valley below. He is the salt, the leaven, the light of the community, nay, the nation.

When we perform a Pūjā at a shrine, we offer a Kāṇika. By the same token, here also we offer Guru Kāṇika during Pāda Pūjā /Pādukā Pūjā.

This is the symbolism of Pāda Pūjā.

Our reigning Gurudeva does not accept His Pāda Pūjā. We are nowadays worshipping the Holy Sandals (Pādukā) of our Parama Guru, P.P. Shrīmat Parijñānāshrama Swāmijī. The sandals of the Guru are as holy as His Feet. Shrī Guru Pādukā Stotraṁ is an eulogy (Stotraṁ) of the Guru’s sandals. Readers are invited to study the pages 38 to 44 of “Sadyojāta Bodhāmṛta” wherein P.P. Shrīmat Sadyojāta Shaṅkarāshrama Swāmijī has lucidly explained this hymn. The three letters Pā, Du, Kā tell us a lot about Pādukā. Verse No.9 on page 43 partly reads:

पालनात् दुरितच्छेदात् कामितार्थप्रपूरणात्

The Pādukā protects (पालन) us, nourishes us. It cuts (छेद) asunder the knotty evil (दुरित) and negativity blighting our lives and it fulfils (प्रपूर्ण) our legitimate desires (कामितार्थ). How? Not by our mere ritual adoration, but by enshrining the sandals in our thought (मूर्ध्नि पूजयेत्) by cultivating the awareness of Guru's constant presence with the conviction that, "I am not alone, the Guru is always beside me, ever ready to lend a helping hand whenever I stagger and fall." Such a Bhakta sings ecstatically

ज्या ज्या स्थळीं हे मन जाय माझें |
 त्या त्या स्थळीं हें निज रूप तूझें |
 मी ठेवितो मस्तक ज्या ठिकाणीं |
 तेथे तुझे सदगुरु पाय दोन्हीं ॥४॥

Kanakābhisheka : Kanaka means gold and stands for Lakṣmī or Goddess of wealth. Her rightful place is with Nārāyaṇa. When we place a gold coin on the Feet of the Guru during Kanakābhisheka, it is a silent declaration of our commitment to consecrate our wealth by utilising it for righteous ends and not just blow it up in ignoble pursuits.



TĪRTHA VITARAṆA (तीर्थ वितरण)

Once the Pāda Pūjā is over, the devotees make a beeline to receive Tīrtha from the reigning Gurudeva. In our Guruparamparā, the Guru untiringly gives Tīrtha to one and all, undaunted by the numbers. Often the devotees number a few hundreds. Yet, P. P. Swāmījī smilingly gives Tīrtha to everyone. Is it not very tiresome to Him, we wonder. Receiving Tīrtha is a precious moment for a devotee. It affords him/her a welcome opportunity to build up an instant spiritual rapport with the Guru and so the compassionate Guru never disappoints. The unalloyed joy felt by the devotee in receiving the Tīrtha directly from the Master makes Him unmindful of the physical discomfort in ministering to so many.

What is meant by Tīrtha? Tīrtha is that which sanctifies us, consecrates us and helps us to ferry ourselves (tāraṇa) across the seamless Saṁsāra. It won't do for us to belittle Tīrtha as just a little water. Says a popular verse :

मन्त्रे तीर्थे द्विजे देवे दैवज्ञे भेषजे गुरौ |
यादृशी भावना यस्य सिद्धिर्भवति तादृशी ||

(“Mantra, Tīrtha, a Brāhmaṇa, deity, astrologer, medicine and the Guru – they become

fruitful to us in proportion to our attitude towards them.”)

When Alum is added to muddy water, the sediment settles down at the bottom. Clear water remains at the top. Likewise, the Tīrtha — received from the Guru or at a temple from the priest — is supposed to purify our lake of the mind (*mānasa sarovara*). *Rajoguṇa* and *Tamoguṇa* should settle down and *Sattvaguṇa* should make it to the top. When *Sattva* reigns supreme, divine qualities begin to blossom. What the *Gītā* calls as the *Daivī Sampatti* — what the saint *Purandara Dāsa* referred to as *Bhāgyadā Lakṣmī* — gently glides into our personality. These benign qualities constitute the true Tīrtha. When imbibed by unswerving faith and devotion, the physical Tīrtha awakens this internal Tīrtha.

The *Mahābhārata* says :

सत्यं तीर्थं क्षमातीर्थं तीर्थमिन्द्रियनिग्रहः |
 सर्वभूतदयातीर्थं तीर्थमार्जवमेव च ॥
 दानं तीर्थं दमस्तीर्थं संतोषस्तीर्थमुच्यते |
 ब्रह्मचर्यं परं तीर्थं तीर्थं च प्रियवादिता ॥
 ज्ञानं तीर्थं धृतिस्तीर्थं तपस्तीर्थमुदाहृतम् |
 तीर्थानामपि तत् तीर्थं विशुद्धिर्मनसः परा ॥

(“Truthfulness, forgiveness, sense control, being kind to all beings, straightforwardness in our dealings, charity, control of motor organs,

being cheerful and happy always, continence, speaking sweetly and softly, knowledge, spiritual grit, austerity – these constitute Tīrtha. The most excellent Tīrtha is the purity of mind.”)

Our body is the temple of God. Ādi Shaṅkara calls it Kāshī (काशीक्षेत्रं शरीरम्) in his Kāshī Pañchakaṁ Stotraṁ. When the above qualities of head and heart begin to bloom within us, every soul becomes a mobile and dynamic Tīrtha Kṣetra indeed.

It would be beneficial to us to take time to pause and ponder once in a while as to how far we have succeeded in enriching ourselves with this internal Tīrtha.



शङ्कर (द्वितीय) बोधामृत

सुख आणि दुःख सकळिक । यामाजीं बघावा श्रीहरी एक ।
त्यावीण नाहीं आणिक । तोचि भरला सर्वत्र ॥

In the midst of pleasure and pain, joy and sorrow, you should always behold the One Supreme Hari, the Lord. There is naught apart from Him. He has pervaded everywhere.

सकल विषय देवाचे देख । मी नसे त्यांचा मालक ।
म्हणोनी मजला त्यांचा हक्क । नसे खचित निघरि ॥

All these objects belong to the Lord. I am not their owner. Therefore, I can stake no personal claim on them at all.

(Shrī Chitrāpura Guruparamparā Charitra)

PRASĀDA

(प्रसाद)

We always say Tīrtha-Prasāda and never Prasāda-Tīrtha. This is not just a vagary of our speech. This is as it should be : Tīrtha is the cause and Prasāda is the effect. Be it at the Math or in the camp of P.P. Swāmījī, around noon, the Vaidiks would announce : “Those who have performed Sevā, should come forward to receive Prasāda.” Does Sevā mean only those rituals for which we pay? Not at all. Sevā means service. When we look upon ourselves as servants of God and the Guru, the fruit of this outlook is Prasāda. We will not be able to visualize ourselves as servants unless the internal Tīrtha is awakened within us. The internal Tīrtha paves the way for the dawn of meekness, humility and the attitude of gratitude which qualify us to be servants of God and the Guru.

The physical Prasāda is an eloquent symbol. There is more to it than meets the eye. I shall here dilate upon a few meanings:

1. Prasāda means serenity. When no ripples agitate the surface of a lake, that condition is Prasāda. Our mind is also a lake. It is Mānasa Sarovara, but, alas! It is anything but serene with most of us, most of the

time. A serene mind is what everyone longs for, be he a prince or a pauper. This serenity is what every Pūjā is intended to pave way to. That's why, at the end of Pūjā, Prasāda is given. But, such a serene mind cannot just drop on our lap for the mere asking. We have to earn it. We have to pay a price for it. That price is the internalized Tirtha as explained earlier. The so called "peace of mind" we seek in our day-to-day living is very uncertain and precarious. It is totally at the mercy of what happens outside. If everything turns out as we wish, we say we are at peace. If things go haywire, our peace just goes out of the window. Prasāda or serenity is not of this 'here today, gone tomorrow' variety. It is centered not outside, but inside, in a deep and abiding conviction that God and Guru are always with us, brooding over us like doting mothers. Prasāda is an enduring peace, never deserting us, come what may. It is like that constant hum of the drone (Tānpurā) in a concert. The musician may traverse up and down the scale in ever so many ways, but the gentle hum of the drone goes on and on undisturbed. Such unruffled serenity and composure is what we should all seek as the crowning glory of our Sādhanā.

2. Prasāda means cheerfulness. प्रसादस्तु प्रसन्नता .

Sant Tukārāma tells us “मन करारे प्रसन्न, सर्व सिद्धींचे कारण”. Being always cheerful is a *Siddhi par excellence*. All other supernatural powers (Siddhis) pale into insignificance in comparison.

In the Rāmāyaṇa the sage Bharadvāja shows Rāma a clear mountain stream and says, “See this stream, Rāma, clear and pleasant (*prasannaṁ*) like the mind of a noble man (*Sanmanushya mano yathā*).” Patāñjali in his Yoga Sūtra, discusses in detail about Chitta Prasādanam, the art of being cheerful. Sant Tukārāma lived in abject poverty, but, his attitude was of an undying gratitude towards God. “I can’t keep count of Your blessings, O Pāṇḍuraṅga You have favoured me so much.” (थोर तुझे उपकार पांडुरंगा) Thus did his heart overflow with thankfulness. हरि तुम बहुत अनुग्रह कीन्हो (O Hari, You have showered me with so much grace!) sang Tulsīdāsa. This marvellous quality of the mind is Prasāda. One who has this Prasāda is inwardly rich, though outwardly he may be a pauper. Indeed, heaven is wherever he is.

3. Prasāda also means blessings and benediction or Anugraha. The Anugraha of God and the Guru is always there. The trouble is, we are not ready and receptive

to imbibe it. The sun, for example, may be basking in all his glory in the sky. The sunshine is his Anugraha. But, due to our cussedness if we keep our windows shut, don't we block out that Anugraha? Take another example: It may be pouring cats and dogs outside. If we want, we can fill our reservoirs. But, suppose if we keep our vessels upside down, will even a drop be collected? No, and we will be deprived of the Anugraha of the rain-god. Likewise, we have to teach and train ourselves to be open to the perennial shower of Anugraha of God and the Guru. "Take one step towards me and I shall take ten steps towards you," says the saintly Sāibābā. We find these assuring words writ large at the portals of a Sāi shrine. The internalized Tīrtha prepares us to take that first momentous step.

4. The physical Prasāda we get at the Math or at any temple either in person or by post may be fresh or not. Nevertheless, it is Prasāda. The flower petals may be fresh and the sandal paste wet. The petals may be withered and the Gandha (sandal-paste) dry. In either case, we accept it reverentially as Prasāda. Likewise, we should accept joy and sorrow, the success and the failure, the gains and the losses in life as Prasāda, dispensed according to our Karma by

Almighty who alone knows what is good for us in the long run. When we learn to gracefully take in our stride the ups and downs of life, muttering His name all the time in fair weather or foul, we are blessed with forbearance. We manage to keep smiling in trying situations where most will tend towards a nervous breakdown. We would stay afloat where many would merely sink. This is the Anugraha of God and the Guru. Lord Kṛṣṇa was always with the Pāṇḍavas, but, they had their share of trials and tribulations. They breezily sailed through crisis after crisis. This astounding fortitude, this feat of endurance is God's Anugraha, Guru's Anugraha. It is Prasāda, the unflappable equipoise of the mind. A person may just leap from a dizzy height and break his bones or worse, meet with death. Another may leap, armed with a Parachute. The law of gravitation makes no exception. It acts on both, but, the one with Parachute saves the day. Shraddhā and Vishwāsa – an unswerving faith that God and the Guru are always beside us – are our Parachute. Prasāda or Anugraha smiles on us in the form of this unwavering faith.

In the Satya Nārāyaṇa Vrata story, we find that those who gladly partook of the Prasāda fared exceedingly well while those who did not,

had to pay dearly for their folly. The moral of the story is that Prasāda is something to be cherished reverentially and not to be slighted under any circumstances.

The word 'Prasāda' greets us in so many contexts in the Bhagavadgītā. The readers may look up following verses to know more : II-64/65, XVII-16 and XVIII-56, 58 & 62.



केशव बोधामृत

जातीचा अंत्यज कां असेना । आपत्काळीं त्याच्याही जाण ।
केशवे प्रेमे संगोपन । तोचि जाणा खरा भक्त ॥

One may be an 'untouchable' by birth. But, in times of distress, even he should be looked after with love. He is a true Bhakta who acts in this spirit.

(Shree Chitrapura Guruparampara Charitra)

(There is no Upadesha by SWĀMĪ

VĀMANĀSHRAMA in the

Shrī Chitrāpura Guruparamparā Charitra)

कृष्णाश्रम बोधामृत

तैसे तेथे साऱ्या विषयीं । नामरूप त्यागावे पाहीं ।
तेहां दिसले ब्रह्मचि सर्वही । भवानीशंकर तोचि पैं॥

Likewise, whatever be the contents of your perception, witness them, giving up their names and forms. You will, then, behold everywhere Brahman, the Lord Bhavanishankar.

(Shrī Chitrāpura Guruparamparā Charitra)

BHIKSHĀ

(भिक्षा)

Ādi Shaṅkarāchārya prays to Mother
Annapūrṇā :

अन्नपूर्णे सदापूर्णे शङ्करप्राणवल्लभे |
ज्ञानवैराग्य सिद्ध्यर्थं भिक्षां देहि च पार्वति ||

“O Mother Annapūrṇā, Thou art always full (of love for Thy creation). Thou art the beloved of Shaṅkara. Pray confer on me the gift of Bhikshā so I can foster my Knowledge and Dispassion.”

Every Sanyāsī needs Bhikshā for the very purpose articulated by Ādi Shaṅkarāchārya and it is the precious privilege of the Shishyavarga (laity) to ensure same.

The devotees enlisted for the Bhikshā Sevā, pour a little water on the outstretched palm of the Sanyāsī. This is known as Hastodaka. The Vedic Mantra chanted by the priest in attendance is :

ये देवासो दिव्येकादशस्थ पृथिव्यामध्ये एकादशस्थ
अप्सुक्षितो महिनैकादशस्थ ते देवासो यज्ञमिमं जुषध्वम् |

“Let the eleven gods who inhabit the heavenly region, the eleven who inhabit the earth and the eleven who inhabit the mid-region in all glory come hither and partake of this Yajña.”
(Taittriya Samhita 1-4-10)

It would be interesting to see the various shades of Bhikṣhā detailed in the manuals of Dharmashāstra. Five varieties are given. They are :

1. Mādhukara : Just as bees hop around and collect honey, the Sanyāsī collects food from any three, five or seven houses chosen at random. If no Bhikṣhā is forthcoming even after calling at seven houses, the Sanyāsī has to go back empty-handed. A Sanyāsī is supposed to be content with only eight *grāsa* (*ghāsu* in Koṅkaṇī) or morsels, each morsel being of egg-size (*kukkuṭāṇḍa*).
2. Prākpranīta : Even before the Sanyāsī gets up from his bed in the wee hours of the morning, a devotee comes and extends an invitation to receive Bhikṣhā at his home.
3. Ayāchita : The Sanyāsī has got up to attend to his morning ablutions, but is yet to go out to seek Bhikṣhā. Just then, a devotee comes and invites. Upto Swāmī Kṛṣṇāshrama, this form of Bhikṣhā appears to have been observed. Devotees used to invite the Sadguru to receive Bhikṣhā at their homes. From Swāmī Pāṇḍuraṅgāshrama onwards, the Upapanna form of Bhikṣhā became the standard practice.
4. Tātkaṅka : The Sanyāsī is near the threshold of a house. He is yet to pronounce 'Bhavatī

Bhikshām dehi.’ Even before he does so, the Bhikshā is given.

5. Upapanna : Bhikshā is made available by devotees at the camp of the Sanyāsī. The Bhikshā currently in vogue at various Maths is in this category.

Our sacred books prescribe that the food that we consume should be free from four defects:

i) *Svabhāva Doṣa* : Innate or intrinsic defect. Non-vegetarian food, garlic, onion, mushrooms, stale food etc.

ii) *Āshraya Doṣa*: Defect in the container. The vessels, the kitchen as also the state of mind of those preparing the food should be in excellent condition.

iii) *Nimitta Doṣa*: Accidentally some foreign matter drops into food, such as a strand of hair, insect, etc.

iv) *Svatva Doṣa*: The person offering the food or Bhikshā spends out of ill-gotten wealth.

Needless to say, how much careful we should be while arranging Bhikshā for a Sanyāsī.

As portrayed in the above Mantra, the Bhikshā that the Sanyāsī partakes, is on par with a Yajña, a solemn sacrifice and the 33 gods are urged to come and witness the same.

The devotees hosting the Bhikṣhā give Hastodaka and leave. They are dissuaded from bowing down. The Guru has been already holding His outstretched hand for quite some time and if every devotee were to further offer his salutations by bowing down, it means more delay. The Vaidic in attendance, therefore, tells us after we give Hastodaka to kindly leave without bowing down.

The Sadguru chants the first verse of Īshāvasya Upanishad, given below, before partaking the Bhikṣhā:

ईशावास्यमिदं सर्वं यत् किञ्च जगत्यां जगत् ।
तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथा मा गृधः कस्यस्वित् धनम् ॥

“Whatever is there in this dynamic universe is pervaded by God, Renounce for His sake and joy. Don’t desire anyone’s possessions.”)



पांडुरंग बोधामृत

भक्ति-प्रेम हेचि श्रेष्ठ । त्यावीण अनेक साधने उत्कृष्ट ।
केली जरी नाना खटपट । तरी निष्फळ ते सारे ॥

Devotion and love are the primary excellences. You may pursue ever so many pathways to God; but, if these two ingredients are wanting, they will be futile indeed.

(ShrīChitrāpura GuruparamparāCharitra)

KSHAMĀ YĀCHANĀ

(क्षमा याचना)

As with God, so with the Guru – this is the basic axiom governing the Shishya’s relationship with the Guru. Kshamā Yāchanā forms part of every worship. In the Shivapūjana section of our Nitya Pāṭha, this is how we seek forgiveness from the Almighty Shiva :

आवाहनं न जानामि न जानामि विसर्जनम् |
पूजां नैव च जानामि क्षमस्व परमेश्वर ॥
क्षमस्व देवदेवेश क्षमस्व भुवनेश्वर |
तव पादांवुजे नित्यं निश्चला भक्तिरस्तु मे ॥

“I don’t know properly the modalities of Āvāhana and Visarjana. I don’t know at all how to perform the Pūjā properly. Forgive me, O Lord. O God of gods, O Lord of the Universe! Forgive me. May I cherish unswerving devotion at Thy Lotus Feet.”

In the Devīpūjana section of Nitya Pāṭha, we seek Her forgiveness as under :

अपराधसहस्राणि क्रियन्तेऽहर्निशं मया |
दासोऽयमिति मां मत्वा क्षमस्व परमेश्वरि ॥
अपराधो भवत्येव सेवकस्य पदे पदे |
कोऽपरः सहते लोके केवलं मातरं विना ॥

“Day and night, countless blunders are

committed by me. Look upon me as Thy servant and forgive me, O Empress of the Universe. It is but natural that a servant makes mistakes. Who else but a Mother will put up with such blunders and forgive?"

The farewell speech by the host on the concluding day of P.P. Swāmījī's visit to a Local Sabhā is like a Visarjana ceremony in a Pūjā. The sentiments expressed by the spokesman of the Sabhā in Kṣhamā Yāchanā bear a parallel to the forgiveness sought while concluding a Pūjā.



आनन्द बोधामृत

चित्रापुर मठ

देशभर मठ	देवालयें किती	। चित्रापुर महति	विशिष्टचि ।
चित्रापुर मठ	स्थापियेला जाणा	। धर्म-अनुष्ठाना	हेतु मुख्य ।
वर्णाश्रम धर्मा	ब्राह्मण्यप्रधान	। त्याचें केंद्रस्थान	येथे जाणा ।
जातीच्या श्रेष्ठांनी	स्थापियेला मठ	। निभावणें नीट	ध्यानीं असो ।
आचार विचार	मठाचा पसारा	। धर्माच्या प्रचारा	मठ असे ।

समाज सेवक

सर्वांशी समता	प्रेम असो देणें	। दोष निवारणें	शक्य होय ।
सेवाभावी जन	सेवक सज्जन	। झटति रात्रंदिन	निस्वाथनि ।
जातिच्या कल्याणा	योग क्षेम चिंति	। अशांच्या संगतीं	प्रेमे नांदा ।
मतभेद सारे	विवेकें निवारणें	। कल्याणा साधणें	समाजाचें ।
भवानिशंकर	तुम्हां पाठिराखा	। भक्तजन सखा	पावो तुम्हां ।

(From आनन्द बोधामृत by late Shri. Dattatraya Manjunath Burde)

ĀSHĪRVACHANA (आशीर्वचन)

The highlight of the last day's programme at P.P. Swāmījī's camp is always the Āshīrvachana. Devotees yearn to listen to it, and the mere act of devout listening is supposed to be meritorious.

What is the difference between Pravachana and Āshīrvachana? In fact, what is meant by Pravachana and why is this word specifically reserved only for the discourse of a Mahātmā? Vachana is any sentence or speech. "Did you have your dinner? What was the menu?" – this is an example of mere Vachana. All our mundane talk centering around Artha and Kāma – money, necessities of life, pursuit of desires – is just a set of Vachana. The prefix 'pra' when added to Vachana makes it an 'elevated talk' and the elevation consists of Dharma and Moksha. Dharma, Artha, Kāma and Moksha are the four Purushārthas or primary goals of human endeavour. Mostly we surf around Artha and Kāma. The Guru steps in to awaken us to realize the importance of Dharma and Moksha. Hence, His words are charged with significance. They are profound unlike our trivial chatter. So, the utterances of a Mahātmā are called Pravachanas.

When Pravachanas are rounded off with blessings — Āshīrvāda – they are called Āshīrvachanas. When P.P. Swāmījī annotates a

Stotra in a Swādhyāya session or when He instructs and enlightens us in a Vimarsha or Parāmarsha session, His utterances constitute Pravachanas. To qualify as Āshīrvachanas, there should be the concluding prayer for blessings.

Devout listening to Guru's Pravachana is Shravaṇa. We should try to understand its import and reflect on it. Such a reflection is called Manana. Once the truth is grasped as a result of such Manana, we should seize upon this truth and never let it go out of our grasp. We should be established in the truth-awareness. This is Nididhyāsa.

A word of caution to aspiring listeners! Now-a-days there is no dearth of Pravachanas available to us on various TV channels or in several Satsaṅgas. Indiscriminate listening is a sure recipe for a mental fog. The speakers may represent a variety of doctrines. They may propound Dvaita, Vishiṣṭādvaita or Advaita. If we are not careful, the already confused Sādhaka will become more confounded. So, we should confine ourselves to reading or listening to only such Upadesha as is in harmony with our Sampradāya.

Let me tell you a story : A Sādhaka was instructed by an Advaitin to keep chanting 'Soham' (सोऽहम्) which means 'I and God are identical in essence'. He sat in a secluded corner and devoutly kept chanting the same. After a little while, a saint following Dvaita Sampradāya passed by. He noticed that the Sādhaka was chanting 'Soham'. "

How could he say that he and God are identical?" wondered the saint. To him, this chant was a sacrilege. So, he told him to add 'dā' (दा) before 'Soham' and chant 'Dāsoham' which means 'I am eternally a servant of God'. The Sādhaka kept on chanting it. After some weeks, the saint who had taught him to mutter 'Soham' came that way and was aghast to hear 'Dāsoham'. He scolded him for his indiscretion and told him to repair the damage by prefixing 'sa' so that the chant becomes 'sadā soham' ('Always, I and God are identical in essence'). As his ill-luck would have it, after some weeks, the Dvaitin saint again passed by and was furious to hear what he thought was a blasphemy. He chided the Sādhaka and proposed an amendment : He told him to add the prefix 'dā' and utter the line. Now, it was 'Dāsa Dāsoham' ('I am the servant of the servant of God'). The story has a tragic end : the hapless Sādhaka, torn between these two doctrines, suffered a nervous breakdown and nearly wrecked himself!



परिज्ञान (तृतीय) बोधामृत

जगदंबेचे एकपात्री प्रयोग अनेक । चालती ब्रह्मांडपटावरी सुरेख ।
 तीच ब्रह्मा तीच ब्रह्माणी एक । नाव रूप कल्पनातीत जी ॥
 तीचि ब्रह्मा विष्णु महेश । तीचि ॐकारस्वरूप गणेश ।
 अल्ला बुध्द महावीर ईश । तीच विश्वंभर सद्गुरु माऊली ॥

(Shree Chitrapura Guruparampara Charitra)

PHALA MANTRĀKSHATA

(फल मन्त्राक्षत)

The words 'Phala Mantrākshata' are familiar to all of us. We consider it as our most sacred spiritual obligation to receive Phala Mantrākshata from a Swāmī. He may or may not be our ordained Guru. He may belong to another Math, but, our call at His august presence is incomplete unless we have been blessed with Phala Mantrākshata. What is the secret of its holiness? Why is it so sacrosanct? Let us explore its significance.

Phala (fruit), Mantra (sacred chants) and Akshata (whole grains of rice) are all part and parcel of ritual worship. When we offer (samarpaṇa) a fruit or Akshata as Upachāras (modes of hospitality to the Divine Guest) we sanctify our acts of offering with appropriate chants. When we offer a fruit we pray:

इदं फलं मया देव स्थापितं पुरतस्तव |
तेन मे सफलावाप्तिर्भवेत् जन्मनि जन्मनि ॥
फलेन फलितं सर्वं त्रैलोक्यं सचराचरम् |
तस्मात्फलप्रदानेन सफलाश्च मनोरथाः ॥

“I have placed before Thee, Oh God, this fruit as my offering. Thereby, may my lives be fruitful in birth after birth. Everything, animate and

inanimate, in the three worlds has its appointed fruit as its fulfillment. Hence, may all my wishes be fulfilled with the offering of the fruit.”)

The fruit is a symbol of our Karma Phala. What we experience now is the fruit of our deeds and misdeeds in our past life. We are now anxious that our future should be truly fruitful and fulfilling. We have messed up our life because we have kept God out of our reckoning. We now hasten to mend our ways. We offer Nārī Keḷī to the Lord. It comes back to us sanctified by Mantras. We cherish it as Prasāda, tokens of divine grace.

The Shvetāshvatara Upanishad exhorts us to be as devoted to our Guru as we are to God. (यस्य देवे पराभक्तिः यथा देवे तथा गुरौ). As we offer Nārī Keḷī to God, so should we offer a fruit to the Guru. It is not mandatory that only coconut be offered. Let us suppose coconuts are not available, but some other fruits are. We can unhesitatingly offer them. Coconuts are omnipresent in our land and hence, they top the list. That’s all. It is the Phala – any Phala – that matters.

When we approach the Guru (as also a child) for the first time, we should not go empty-handed, but have at least a fruit in our hands. If it is a coconut that we are offering, its tuft (*sheṇḍī*) should be towards the Guru. When we get back the coconut from the Guru, during Phala

Mantrākshata, the tuft will be towards us.

Kshata means 'broken, injured'. Akshata, the whole grain, is symbolic of wholeness and completeness. When any item of offering among the several Upachāras is not available, we can simply offer Akshata as proxy. This is the provision in the manuals of worship. Chant the name of the specific Upachāra – say, ornaments (alankāra) – and offer Akshata (सर्वालंकारार्थे अक्षतान् समर्पयामि). They are tiny and easily available. Offered with genuine devotion and feeling (bhakti, bhāva), the Lord accepts them graciously as if we have offered the articles named in the respective Upachāra.

Whole grains of rice are symbols of abundance (अक्षताः बहुप्रसवाः). When consecrated (Mantra) Akshatas are given to us by a Master, it signifies that no (अ) harm (क्षत) would befall us, that we would live 'whole' lives (not just sensory, but intellectual and spiritual too) and that we would be heir to God's blessings as countless as the tiny grains of Akshatas.

The grains of rice are tinged with kuṅkuma (an article of auspiciousness). Manuals of priesthood (पौराहित्य) like Ṛgvedī Brahmakarmasamuchchaya have sections called Shānti Sūktas and Āshīrvāda Mantras. The Vaidiks are enjoined upon to chant some, if not all, of these

Mantras while mixing the grains of rice, moistened with a few drops of sandalwood oil, with kuṅkuma. Then and then only these grains of rice become Mantrākṣatas. The sandalwood oil (*sneha*) signifies that the Guru - Shishya bond is one of unalloyed affection (*sneha*) and hence, fragrant. When His Holiness touches them, they are twice blessed as it were.

Some of these Mantras are :

शतं जीव शरदो वर्धमानः शतं हेमन्तान् शतमुवसन्तान् ।
शतमिन्द्राग्निः सविता बृहस्पतिः शतायुषा हविशेमं पुनर्दुः ॥

“May thou prosper for a hundred autumns, a hundred winters and a hundred springs. May Indra, Agni, Savitā, Br̥haspati confer on thee a gift of a long life spanning hundred years.” (Ṛgveda 10-161-4)

देवानां भद्रा सुमतिः ऋजूयतां देवानां रतिः अभि नो निवर्तताम् ।
देवानां सख्यम् उपसेदिमा वयं देवानाम् आयुः प्रतिरन्तु जीवसे ॥

“May the benign intelligence of the gods be ours. May the grace of gods smile about us. We have sought the friendship of gods. May they grant us a long span of life.” (Ṛgveda 1-89-2)

भद्रं कर्णेभिः शृणुयाम देवाः भद्रं पश्येमाक्षभिर्यजत्राः ।
स्थिरैरङ्गैः तुष्टुवांसस्तनूभिः व्यशेम देवहितं यदायुः ॥

“Oh gods, may we listen with our ears to what is good. Oh holy ones, may we see with our eyes what is good. May we, with firm limbs and bodies, sing your praise and spend fruitfully the divinely ordained span of life.” (Ṛgveda 1-89-8)

शतमिन्न शरदो अन्ति देवाः यत्र नश्चक्रा जरसं तनूनाम् ।
पुत्रासो यत्र पितरो भवन्ति मा नो मध्या रीरिषतायुः गन्तो ॥

“Verily, a hundred autumns lie before us, Oh gods, within which you cause the decay of our bodies, within which our sons become fathers. Please don’t break in the middle the course of our fleeting lives.” (R̥gveda 1-89-9)

This is the underlying gospel of hope and cheer, of blessing and benediction that the Phala-Mantrākṣata articulates for us. It is a manifest symbol of the Grace of the God and the Guru. To receive Phala- Mantrākṣata, understanding its significance, is to be reassured that we are not alone. “I take care of your Yoga and Kṣhema” (योगक्षेमं वहाम्यहम्) said the Lord in Gītā. Every time we are given Phala- Mantrākṣata, we are reminded of this eternal assurance of the Lord. There is a renewal of hope and faith, and a renewal of love and devotion that bind us to the Lotus Feet of Lord Bhavānīśaṅkara and the Guru.



सद्योजात बोधामृत

गुरुदृष्टि कश्चि आस्ता ? - गुरु केवल आत्मतत्वाक मात्र पळैता. गुरु दोष पोळोंवच्याक वचना. बरे गुणमात्र पळैता. बऱ्याक मात्र प्रोत्साहन दिता. आम्का तो विश्वासु येऽनाफुडे आमगेलि दृष्टि सुद्धा आपणागेले कस्ले गुण आस्सति ताज्जेरि वत्ता. ते बरे गुण वाडौंव्याक आमगेले लक्ष वत्ता. तश्चि ती शक्ति प्रबोधन दिता, साधकाक धैर्य मेळता.

(From Sadyojata Bodhamruta - Part I, Page 33)

CONCLUSION

From Pāda Prakṣhālana to Phala Mantrākshata we have come a long way. This has been the way traversed by our elders. With an insight into the meaning and significance, every bit of the journey becomes a thing of beauty and a joy forever.

From the days of yore we have been praying Asatomā Sadgamaya, Tamasomā Jyotirgamaya and Mṛtyormā Amṛtaṁ Gamaya — Lead me from the Unreal to the Real, from Darkness to Light and from Death to Deathlessness. Who is to lead me? The answer is: The Guru will lead me, step by step. We have to lovingly submit to His discipline so He can light up the Jñāna-Dīpa within us:

तेषामेवानुकम्पार्थमहमज्ञानजं तमः |

नाशयाम्यात्मभावस्थो ज्ञानदीपेन भास्वता || (Gītā X-11)

“In order to confer My compassion on them, I, dwelling in their heart, dispel their darkness born of ignorance by the illuminating lamp of Knowledge.”

। हरि ॐ तत् सत् ।



पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात्पूर्णमुदच्यते ।

पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते ॥

ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

ANNEXURES

GLORIOUS GURUPARAMAPARĀ OF SHRĪ CHITRĀPUR MATH

1. H H Shrīmat Parijñānāshrama (I) Swāmijī (1708-1720)
Samādhi at Gokarṇa (North Kanara)
2. H H Shrīmat Shaṅkarāshrama (I) Swāmijī (1720-1757)
Samādhi at Shirālī (North Kanara)
3. H H Shrīmat Parijñānāshrama (II) Swāmijī (1757-1770)
Samādhi at Shirālī (North Kanara)
4. H H Shrīmat Shaṅkarāshrama (II) Swāmijī (1770-1785)
Samādhi at Mallāpur (North Kanara)
5. H H Shrīmat Keshavāshrama Swāmijī (1785-1823)
Samādhi at Shirālī (North Kanara)
6. H H Shrīmat Vāmanāshrama Swāmijī (1823-1839)
Samādhi at Mangalore (South Kanara)
7. H H Shrīmat Kṛṣṇāshrama Swāmijī (1839-1863)
Samādhi at Shirālī (North Kanara)
8. H H Shrīmat Pāṇḍuraṅgāshrama Swāmijī (1863-1915)
Samādhi at Shirālī (North Kanara)
9. H H Shrīmat Ānandāshrama Swāmijī (1915-1966)
Samādhi at Shirālī (North Kanara)
10. H H Shrīmat Parijñānāshrama (III) Swāmijī (1966-1991)
Samādhi at Kārlā (Maharashtra)
11. H H Shrīmat Sadyojāta Shaṅkarāshrama Swāmijī (1997-)



॥ श्रीगुरुवन्दनम् ॥

॥ दीप नमस्कार ॥

SALUTATIONS TO THE LAMPS OF ILLUMINATION

ॐ नमो ज्ञानदीपाय शिवाय ब्रह्मतेजसे ॥

कविष्णुहररूपाय नमः श्रीगुरुमूर्तये ॥ १ ॥

1. Om! Salutations to the Sadguru, the Lamp of Illumination, benign and ever-serene, beaming with divine radiance and the visible manifestation of Brahmā, Vishṇu and Maheshvara.

अज्ञानध्वान्तपटलविध्वंसनदिवाकरान् ॥

सच्चिदानन्दबोधैकसुधाम्बुधिकलानिधीन् ॥२॥

आधिव्याधिभयग्रस्तप्रपन्नजनरक्षकान् ॥

वन्दे बद्धाञ्जलिः श्रीमत्परिज्ञानाश्रमान् गुरून् ॥३॥

- 2-3 I bow with folded hands to Shrīmat Parijñānāshrama Sadguru, a blazing Sun to the veiling gloom of Ignorance and a Moon to the ocean of nectar in the form of Enlightenment about Sachchidānanda (Brahman, the unity of existence, consciousness and bliss), and the Saviour of all that have sought shelter in Him gripped by the fear of the ills of body and mind.

इलापातालनाकस्थपूजितश्रीशिवेशितुः ॥

चरणाम्बुरुहन्यस्तमनोवाक्कायसंभ्रमान् ॥४॥

ईश्वरान् वेदवेदाङ्गवेदान्तज्ञानिनां धुरि ॥

छात्रवृन्दसुखाधारान् भजे श्रीशङ्कराश्रमान् ॥५॥

- 4-5 I adore Shrīmat Shankarāshrama Sadguru, dedicated in thought, speech and deed to the Lotus Feet of Lord Shiva

to whom the denizens of the earth, nether-world and heaven pay homage, who (on account of His commanding mastery) rules over those adept in Vedas, Vedāṅgas (six ancillary branches of Vedas) and Vedānta and is a haven of joy to the community of disciples.

उपमाभावमहिमजितसर्वारिमण्डलान् ॥

सारस्वतद्विजवरैराराधितपदाम्बुजान् ॥६॥

ऊर्जस्वलान्महामोहग्राहग्रासैककर्मणि ॥

नमाम्यानन्दरूपान् श्रीपरिज्ञानाश्रमान् गुरून् ॥७॥

- 6-7. I bow to Shrīmat Parijñānāshrama -II Sadguru who has triumphed over the encircling enemies (both within and without) by His peerless spiritual glory, whose Lotus Feet are adored by the illustrious Sāraswata Brāhmaṇas, who is powerful enough to kill the mighty crocodile called worldly delusion, and is the embodiment of bliss.

एकस्मिन्नद्वितीये च ब्रह्मण्याविष्टमानसान् ॥

यमादियोगसम्पत्तिभ्राजमानमुनीश्वरान् ॥८॥

ऐश्वर्याद्यखिलार्थानां दायकान् करुणानिधीन् ॥

ईडे योगाम्बुधिक्रीडासक्तान् श्रीशङ्कराश्रमान् ॥९॥

- 8-9 I adore Shrīmat Shaṅkarāshrama -II Sadguru, who is engrossed in Brahman - the One without a Second, who is foremost among the ascetics radiant with Yogic lustre due to the observance of Yama, Niyama, etc. (the eightfold Path of Yoga), who confers all that we pray for, such as riches, who is the Treasure-house of Compassion, and who sports in the Ocean of Yoga.

ओजस्विनः सुतपसा द्वैताब्धिवडवानलान् ॥

स्वाङ्घ्रयब्जशरणोद्धर्तुन् स्तौमि श्रीकेशवाश्रमान् ॥१०॥

10. I sing in praise of Shrīmat Keshavāshrama Sadguru,

beaming with spiritual lustre on account of intense penance, who is like the submarine fire called Vāḍava (this fire dries up the oceans at the time of the final deluge) to the Ocean of Dualism and is pledged to protect and save those that have surrendered to His Lotus Feet.

औपाधिके कर्मगते मोहितध्रान्तचेतसाम् ॥

समुद्भ्रणधौरेयान् वन्दे श्रीवामनाश्रमान् ॥११॥

11. My salutations to Shrīmat Vāmanāshrama Sadguru, ever ready to heave up all those who have slipped into the slough of Karma (the vicious circle of action and reaction) having identified themselves with the psychophysical trappings (Upādhis, i.e. limiting adjuncts such as body, vital airs, mind intellect, etc.) and have, therefore, become dazed and deluded.

अञ्जसा तमसः पारमनायासेन सर्वदा ॥

नृपशून्नयतो नौमि कृष्णाश्रमयतीश्वरान् ॥१२॥

12. I bow to Shrīmat Kṛṣṇāshrama Sadguru, foremost among the ascetics and who leads the disciples in bondage (*pashuni* i.e. bound by the fetters - *pāsha* - of illusion) beyond darkness.

अहं वन्दे मनोवाग्भ्यां पाण्डुरङ्गाश्रमान्मुहुः ॥

संस्तवै परया भक्त्या विविधैर्भक्तिलक्षणैः ॥१३॥

13. I bow to Shrīmat Pāṇḍuraṅgāshrama Sadguru again and again in thought and speech, invoking Him with intense devotion in a variety of devotional compositions.

करकञ्जभवांस्तेषां वन्दे धर्मधुरन्धरान् ॥

आनन्दरूपिणः श्रीमदानन्दाश्रमसद्गुरून् ॥१४॥

14. My salutations to Shrīmat Ānandāshrama Sadguru, duly ordained by the Lotus-Hands of Shrīmat

Pāṇḍuraṅgāshrama Sadguru, the embodiment of bliss and who is ever pledged to uphold Dharma (literally, 'the bearer of the yoke of Dharma')

खड्गहाविष्टहृदयान् द्वैतध्वान्तदिवाकरान् ॥

प्रशान्तदान्तोपरतान् परिज्ञानाश्रमान्मुमः ॥१५॥

- 15 We bow to Shrīmat Parijñānāshrama -III Sadguru, who is devoted wholeheartedly to Brahman that is more subtle and omnipresent than ether (cp. 4-10-4/5 of Chāndogya Upanishad and Ādi Shankara's commentary thereon), who is like a blazing Sun to the darkness of Dualism, who is ever serene, self-controlled and withdrawn from the glamour of the world.

गरिमा दृश्यते येषां वेदान्तार्थनिरूपणे ॥

संवित्ज्ञानतपोदीप्तान् निगमागमपारगान् ॥१६॥

संविद्देवीसमासक्तान् श्रुत्यन्तपथदर्शकान् ॥

सद्योजातान्नमाम्यत्र शङ्कराश्रमदेशिकान् ॥१७॥

- 16-17 Salutations to Shrīmat Sadyojāta Shankarāshrama Sadguru who excels in expounding the texts of Vedānta, glows with the radiance born of austere pursuit of Supreme Knowledge, is an adept in Nigamas (Vedas) and Āgamas, is devoted to the Goddess of Supreme Sentience and who shows the Path of Vedānta.

॥ भो पराक् स्वामिन् पराक् ॥

O Revered One, Pray look out for a while !

O Master, Pray look out for a while

(The Sadguru is endowed with Pratyagdr̥ṣṭi - inward vision - in contrast to wayward disciples like us endowed with Parāgdr̥ṣṭi - outward vision. In the above prayer we implore the Sadguru to give up His inward look for a while, throw a compassionate glance at us and thereby redeem us.)



BHO PARĀK, SWĀMIN PARĀK

“Bho parāk, Swāmin parāk” are very familiar words to us. We conclude the Dīpa Namaskāra Stotra with this chant. In English, these words would be “O Revered One, outside. O Master, outside”. What does this pointed allusion to ‘outside’ stand for? Let us explore its significance.

In Gītā (VII-14) Lord says that His Māyā is insurmountable except to His devotees. Īshvara is enshrined in our hearts. Hṛdayaṁ (heart) is so called because (Hṛdi Ayaṁ) He-Ayaṁ dwells there. The meditative portraits of our Sadgurus always show their Hands pointing to the heart where dwells our Antaryāmin, the Lord. To commune with Him in prayer, Nāma Smaraṇa and meditation, we have to look inward - *pratyak*. But, our basic instinct is to look outside, *parāk*. Inside is the sanctuary of the Self. Outside is the realm of Māyā. Poised midway between the Self and Māyā, we have the option to look either way. “*Mana eva manushyaṇāṁ Kāraṇaṁ bandha mokṣayoḥ.*” Mind alone is the cause of our bondage as well as liberation. If we tilt our vision inward - if we cultivate *pratyak dṛṣṭi* - the Kingdom of God is ours. If we slant our vision outside - *parāk dṛṣṭi* - we run the risk of being ensnared and trapped by Māyā. But, Māyā holds no terror to the Bhakta, assures the Lord. As we dip and dive within more and more, communing with Īshvara, and keep looking outside - *parāk* - only to meet the exigencies of daily living, Māyā will sway us less and less. By and by, we will catch a glimpse of Īshvara in the Names and Forms (Nāma Rūpa) of Māyā, the beguiling Nature around us. Vedānta does not tell us to shun the world or to runaway from it. The aim of Vedānta is to teach us HOW to look at the world. “Look at Īshvara within (*pratyak*) ever and anon and then look outside (*parāk*), and lo, you will see Īshvara dancing in every name and form. The world will then appear to you as Īshvara in disguise”. This is the burden of Vedāntic teaching. The Guru steps into our lives to vouchsafe to us this glorious vision, this true way of looking at things, Samyak Darshana. The Supreme **descends** in human form as Guru to help us **ascend** back to our Godhood.

We chant the Dīpa Namaskāra Stotra at dusk when it is time to light up our earthen lamps. The Guru is also like a glowing lamp, Dīpa, because he illumines our life by his inspiring example and precept. Our entire Guruparamparā is like a galaxy of bright lamps. It is our sacred duty to remember our Guruparamparā daily and hence, the recitation of Dīpa Namaskāra Stotra.

The inclinations of the sage and the Samsārin are poles apart. In the words of Gītā, their days and nights are not the same. The sage is an introvert, endowed with *Pratyak dr̥shṭi*. We are extroverts, endowed with a stubborn Parāk *dr̥shṭi*. Īshvara weighs more with the sage and with us, the world. God is the first obligation, the supreme priority, to the sage. To us, He comes last on our agenda, if He comes at all! Our Sadgurus are all sages and are always in Samādhi, divine communion. We, the shishya-varga, are pining for their guidance so that we too can partake of that exalted experience of divine communion and would wish they - our Sadgurus - condescend to open their eyes and look outside, *parāk*, at us.

This is the beautiful imagery underlying the cryptic words “bho parāk, swāmin parāk.” The Sadgurus have to perforce make a frog-leap from divine communion to mortal communication for our sake. We dare not disturb them rudely because to do so - to commit *samādhi bhāṅga* of a sage - is a cardinal sin. But, we cannot help disturbing them if only to be blessed and redeemed by them by their gracious look and Upadesha. Communion is a non-dual Advaitic experience. Communication is relational, rooted in the Dvaita of subject and object. The delicate and daunting task before us is how gently we can bring about this “awakening” of our Masters. Our speech falters and fumbles. We are tongue-tied and nervous. All that we can do is to muster enough courage to just stammer out these few words : “Bho parāk, Swāmin parāk” and await expectantly for the Masters to look outside and bless us with their benign glances.



SIGNIFICANCE OF ASHTĀVADHĀNA

Ashtāvadhāna is a familiar word. We keenly look forward to it in a temple when it is Pūjā time. When we are in our Math (be it at Shirālī or any Samādhi Math at Mallāpur. etc.) or when beloved Swāmījī is camping in our midst during His official tours, Ashtāvadhāna is one of our priorities. This sonorous, ear-filling ceremonial leaves behind a lingering fragrance even after it is over.

Avadhāna means attention. Ashtāvadhāna means eight-fold attention. In his drama entitled Vikramorvashīyam. Kālīdāsa says: *shraṇuta janāḥ. avadhānāt kriyāṁ imāṁ Kālīdāsasya* (Please listen, O folks, attentively to this work of Kālīdāsa). Likewise, we invite the benevolent attention of the Lord to our intellectual, literary and aesthetic attainments in Ashtāvadhāna.

Before offering each performance, the deity is first invoked in an enchantingly poetic verse and then the offering is made. If what is offered is the chant of a few Mantras from Ṛgveda, the Lord is hailed as “Ṛgveda-priya Ṛgveda-sevāṁ avadhāraya.” Whatever be the offering, the Lord is invoked as being fond (priya) of it. This itself highlights that Lord is the patron of all our arts and accomplishments. Whatever little accomplishment we have, we owe it to His or Her Grace. He/She is the perennial fountainhead of all our inspiration — intellectual, literary and aesthetic. We should pursue our favourite art or science, not just as a hobby to beguile us, but as SEVĀ, as a service. This is the moral of the exercise.

In the Chāndogya Upanishad. we have Nārada questing for Self-knowledge. He comes near Sanatkumāra and implores him : *Adhihi Bhagavān* (Please instruct me, O Revered One.) The sage asks Nārada about his attainments. Nārada reels off a string of contemporary arts and sciences he has mastered, but adds ruefully that he is only a knower of mantra (mantravit) and not a Knower of Self (Ātmavit). Unless he

becomes a Knower of Self, he cannot overcome sorrow and so, he implores Sanatkumāra to ferry him across sorrow (*shokam tārayatū*). It is only when our artistic, literary and intellectual attainments are tempered by Bhakti, do we find them fulfilling and meaningful. If God is banished from our scheme of values, all these attainments only serve to fill us with vanity and conceit.

When we do *Bhasma-dhāraṇa*, we chant certain *Mantras*. One of them is *Īshānah sarva vidyānām*. God is the Lord and Custodian of all arts and sciences. It is “courtesy God” that we accomplish whatever little we can in our arts and sciences. All these attainments are meant to glorify Him. They are to be offered at His Feet in a chastened spirit of Naivedya. “What is rightfully yours, we are offering to you, O Govinda (*tvadīyam vastu Govinda, tubhyameva samarpaye*)” is what we chant while we are offering Naivedya. This spirit marks the offering of our literary, intellectual and aesthetic attainments. They are His - He is their fountainhead - and we offer them to Him to please Him. This spirit of *samarpaṇa* is the keynote of Aṣṭāvadhāna Sevā. We offer them to God, presenting Him with just a little sample of our attainments in each field so that He would bless us to forge ahead with renewed vigour and dedication.

Our presentations actually number 13. They are Ṛgveda, Yajurveda, Sāma Veda, Atharva Veda, Vedānta, Purāṇa, Gadya-Padya (partly prose, partly poetry), musical compositions called Aṣṭaka, vocal music (*sangīta*), conch (*shankha*), flute (*veṇu*), a reed instrument (*Mouri*) and finally an ensemble of all these instruments (*sarva vādya*). If we club together the four Vedas as one presentation and the last three instrumental items also as one we have then a package of eight (*aṣṭa*) wherewith we entice His attention (*avadhāna*).

All our deities are patrons of arts and sciences. Take Mother Lalitā for example. Among Her epithets are :

Kāvyālāpa vinodinī (who is delighted by poetic recitation)

Kalānidhi (treasure-house of arts)

Gāna-lolupā (fond of singing) Kāvya-kalā (Art of Poetry)

In the Kenopanishad, Mother Umā humbles the cosmic elements- Fire, Water, Wind, etc. They are powerless to deal with a mere tuft of grass. It dawns on them at last that their - so called their -strength is only a delegated strength. Without God, on their own, their much-vaunted powers amount to nothing at all.

All votaries of arts and sciences should bear this salient truth in mind. Their minds, intellects, speech - nay, every particle and cell in their being - derive their strength from the Supreme. To Him, therefore, we should present our attainments in a mood of devotion and service so that we can march from strength to strength with His blessings and Grace.

Concluding his immortal hymn Soundaryalaharī, Ādi Śhaṅkara articulates his utter dependence on Her resources. Says he:

त्वदीयाभिः वाग्भिः तव जननि वाचां स्तुतिरियम्

(O Mother, with Thine own words I have composed this hymn in Thy praise)

It is this *samarpaṇa bhāva* enjoined upon Arjuna by Śhrī Kṛṣṇa in Gītā that we find crystallised in the form of this unique devotional service called Aṣṭāvadhāna. It is unique to our Sanātana Dharma. We will look for it in vain in the liturgy of other Faiths.

There is nothing sacrosanct about the number 8. It is just illustrative, not exhaustive. In Gītā, the Lord enjoined upon us to offer all that we do (*yat karoṣi yadashnāsi...tat kuruṣva madarpaṇam*) at His Feet. We should infuse this *samarpaṇa bhāva* into all our exertions and present them for His Avadhāna. This is the moral and the message of Aṣṭāvadhāna.



SIGNIFICANCE OF CHĀTURMĀSYA

Chāturmāsa is a familiar word .The spiritual vows (Vrata) undertaken during Chāturmāsa constitute Chāturmāsyā.

Literally, Chāturmāsa means, four months. The period beginning with Āshāḍha Shukla Ekādashī to Kārtika Shukla Dwādashī is called Chāturmāsa.

Lord Viṣṇu is supposed to go to bed on the former day (*shayanī ekādashī*) and get up from His serpentine bed (*sheṣha shayana*) on the latter day (*utthāna dwādashī*) In between , the Lord turns in sleep from one side to the other , as we mere mortals do , on Bhādrapada Shukla Ekādashī (*parivartinī ekādashī*).

Viṣṇu going to sleep! Sounds funny, does it not? But, actually it is a beautiful idea to highlight the benumbing effect of monsoon on mankind. Come monsoon, we turn immobile. With all our vaunted advances in transport and communication, an incessant downpour for a couple of days is enough to lay us low. Roads turn into swamps, transport goes haywire and we are compelled to stay indoors. Imagine the scene - a rural scene some centuries ago. Let us blot out of our mind the modern vehicles and one can easily visualize how maimed and crippled our ancestors must have felt during monsoon! How difficult it would have been for them to venture out at all! So, the enforced idleness was a fact of life. Idleness turns us into couch potatoes. Activity (*rajo guṇa*) grinds to a halt and inertia (*tamo guṇa*) takes over. Lord Viṣṇu going to sleep! An amusing example of God cast in the image of man!

When monsoon exits, the skies smile again brightly, the sun no longer plays hide and seek, the mess clears up and it is business as usual for everyone. Viṣṇu on His toes (*utthāna dwādashī*)

Around mid Bhādrapada, the monsoon is at its fag-end and this is charmingly visualized as Viṣṇu turning in sleep

(*parivartana*) from one side to the other, suggestive of his imminent wakefulness.

An idle mind is a devil's workshop. Our ancestors, therefore, sought to keep idleness and its pernicious pastimes at bay by thoughtfully providing for a spiritual regimen to be followed. In keeping with one's stamina, one was enjoined upon to keep up some vow during the monsoon. It may be a pious resolve to abstain from certain foods (say vegetables in Shrāvaṇa , curds in Bhādrapada, milk in Ashwina and pulses in Kārtika called respectively as *shāka vrata*, *dadhi vrata*, *payovrata* and *dvidala vrata* and lead an austere life giving up carnal pleasures and spending as much time as possible in scriptural study, prayers and meditation. Meat-eaters take a holiday from fish, meat and fowl. The vow may be simple or hard but has to commence on any of the following days : Āshāḍha Shukla Ekādashī, Dwādashī or Pūrṇimā, and conclude on Kārtika Shukla Dwādashī

The performer fasts on the opening day, articulates his resolve (*saṅkalpaḥ*) and prays before the idol (or portrait) of God:

“Oh God , I have undertaken this vrata in Thy presence. May it succeed without any let or hindrance with Thy blessings. Should I die midway after this commencement, may my vrata be completely fulfilled by Thy Grace.”

On concluding day, he or she prays.

“O Lord, this vrata was undertaken by me in order to please Thee. O Janārdana, may it become complete by Thy Grace even if it was defective in my performance.

The Vrata is a measure of our stamina: physical and spiritual. We are, by and large, slaves of habit; we are victims of routine: eating, drinking and lapping up the pleasures of life like robots. Vrata gives ability to say NO to routine with an act of self-denial, small or big, willingly undertaken. If we fare well in fulfilling a small vow, it is no small gain. In words reminiscent of Gitā, we can say “*vratasya svalpamapyasya trāyate mahato bhayāt*” (“even a little of this vrata will save us

from great fear”).

With our self confidence renewed, we can graduate to a bigger vow next time. Small or big, what matters is the stamina, the grit, the unflinching determination, what Gītā calls as Dhṛti to stay on course till the end, come what may.

It is in this context that the Chāturmāsya of a Sanyāsī assumes significance. The layman is advised to turn spiritual. He needs someone to turn to as a spiritual guide and the Sanyāsī steps in to lend the layman a helping hand.

While embracing Sanyāsa, the aspirant takes a vow: *abhayaṁ sarva-bhūtebhyo mattaḥ svāhā*. “May there be fearlessness from me for all creatures”. A Sanyāsī is a Parivrājaka i.e. one who encircles the globe on foot. Wending the way through slush and slime, a Sanyāsī is likely to cause fear to tiny creatures swarming around in monsoon. He, has to tread warily. So, he resolves to stay only at one place to the delight of the householders. For them it is an act of merit to serve the Sanyāsī and practise *shravāṇa* (listening), *manana* (reflection) and *nididhyāsa* (contemplation) under his guidance and watchfulness. The Sanyāsī takes up a sacred text, maybe an Upanishad, a chapter from Gītā or any other spiritual treatise and gives Pravachanas. Thus the Chāturmāsya truly turns out to be a spiritual retreat for one and all.

Ideally, Chāturmāsa spans a duration of four months, but for Sanyāsins there is an exception. It lasts for four fortnights from Āshāḍha Shukla Pūrṇimā (Guru Pūrṇimā) to Bhādrapada Shukla Pūrṇimā. The monsoon is at its peak during these four fortnights only.

After paying homage to the celebrated World Teacher (Jagadguru) Veda Vyāsa, the Sanyāsī addresses his hosts:

प्रायशः प्रावृषि प्राणिसंकुलं वर्त्म दृश्यते ।
 अतस्तेषां अहिंसार्थं मासान् वै चतुरस्त्वह ॥
 स्थास्यामश्चतुरो मासान् अत्रैवासति बाधके ।

निवसामोऽत्र भवतामानुकूल्येन सर्वथा ॥
जीवांकुराणां जीवानां अहिंसा हेतवेऽपिच ॥

“Mostly, the pathway teems with myriads of tiny creatures during the monsoon. To avoid their destruction under our feet (during travel) we propose to stay here for four fortnights (*māsa* in the Shloka is to be interpreted here as fortnight) if it is convenient to you so that we can uphold the vow of Ahimsā towards all living beings.”

Then, the hosts submit as under:

निवसंतु सुखेनात्र गमिष्यामो कृतार्थताम् ।
यथाशक्ति च शुश्रूषां करिष्यामो वयं मुदा ॥

“May it please Your Holiness to stay here most comfortably. We indeed deem it our good fortune and blessedness. We shall serve Your Holiness cheerfully and to the best of our abilities.”

Thus begins the Chāturmāsya of a Sanyāsī on Āshādha Shukla Pūrṇimā also known as Guru Pūrṇimā. A Sanyāsī invokes Gurushakti on Vyāsa Pūrṇimā in a systematic way as prescribed by his own Māṭha Sampradāya. Gurushakti, down the ages, has manifested through myriad galaxies of Gurus. It is impossible to enumerate all. So, nine Pañchakas (unit of 5 each) are reverentially invoked by the Yati and flowers, Gandha and Akshata are offered. As far as our Māṭha Sampradāya is concerned, the nine Pañchakas are:

1. Dakṣiṇāmūrti, Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanātana and Sanatkumāra.
2. Brahmā, Atharvāngirasa, Shvetashvatara, Bharadvāja and Nārada.
3. Vasishtha, Yajnavalkya, Dattātreya, Shvetaketu and Parāshara.
4. Vyāsa, Sumantu, Paila, Jaimini and Vaishampāyana.
5. Shrikṛṣṇa, Bhīshma, Shuka, Gouḍapāda and Govindapāda.

6. Ādi Shaṅkara, Vishwarūpa (also known as Sureshvara), Padmapāda, Hastāmalaka and Toṭakāchārya.
7. Dramiḍāchārya, Vivaraṇāchārya, Vidyāraṇya, Ānandagiri and Anubhūtiśvarūpāchārya.
8. Guru, Parama Guru, Parameshṭi Guru, Parātpara Guru and Samasta Brahmavidyā - Sampravartaka Āchāryas (this last category includes all, those not specifically named here, but who strove to spread the gospel of Vedānta).
9. Ātman, Antarātman, Paramātman, Sarvātman and Brahmātman.

9 is a mystical number and denotes Absolute Reality, who is *pūrṇa*. It is customary to prefix 108 before the name of a Yati. 1 plus 8 is 9 and 9 is Brahmavāchaka. The 9 Pañchakas total 45 (9x5) and 4 plus 5 is 9. Nine multiplied by any numeral gives the sum of 9. Likewise, Brahman has multiplied Himself into all the names and forms (which we designate as Jagat) and is yet *pūrṇa* like 9 .

That is why we chant: Om Pūrṇamada Pūrṇamidaṁ.

The Parivrājaka Yati invokes these Guru-galaxies (Gurumaṇḍala) to bestow on him the strength and stamina to minister to us, the society at large, untiringly during his spiritual sojourn from place to place.

The householders and Sādhakas (be they men or women) get a wonderful break to learn about God and things godly, to solve their doubts, to take practical tips for better progress in Japa (or whatever Sādhana they are doing) and the Sanyāsī too experiences a sense of fulfillment. The more this kind of interaction, the better the Chāturmāsya.



CHĀTURMĀSYA VRATA OBSERVED
BY P. P. SHRĪMAT SADYOJĀTA
SHAṅKARĀSHRAMA SWĀMĪJĪ
FROM 1997 ONWARDS

1997	Shirālī
1998	Bangalore
1999	Mallāpur
2000	Puṇe
2001	Gokaṛṇa
2002	Mangalore
2003	Shirālī
2004	Vithala
2005	Hublī
2006	Kārlā
2007	Mallāpur
2008	Bangalore

SHRI CHITRAPUR MATH TRICENTENARY SIGNATURE TUNE

The **Tricentenary Signature Tune** titled 'GURUDEVON KI AMAR SHAKTI SE' was released by Poojya Swamiji at Saraswati Sarovar, Adi Badri on 1st November 2007. It encapsulates all the essential elements that make the persona of Chitrapur Saraswats, particularly the immortal strength we have derived from our Gurus and the blessings of Goddess Saraswati. The inspiring chant, composed with a view of being sung by devotees on all occasions of the Tricentenary, was sung with gusto and fervour by all the Saraswati yattris. It has been written by Smt. Shailaja Ganguly. The tune was set by Smt. Meera Balsaver and the music recording and mixing was arranged by Shri Yeshwant Moolky. The young singers who sang the chorus for the recording were Shivani Haldipur, Mallika Kilpady, Suma Kaushik, Esha Hoskote, Ketaki Mavinkurve, Namita Kilpady, Ravindra Bijur, Amit Savkooor, Rupak Ubhaykar and Tushar Ubhaykar. The song is given below :

गुरुदेवों की अमर शक्ति से निकले प्रेम प्रवाह की जय हो
(गुरु) परंपरा के त्रिशति पर्व पर उमड रहे उत्साह की जय हो
भवानी शंकर अनुग्रहित चित्रापुर मठ संस्थान की जय हो
विद्या विनय विवेक समन्वित सरस्वती संतान की जय हो
सारस्वत समाज की जय हो
सरस्वती संतान की जय हो
जय हो, जय हो, जय हो

अंतरा

दिव्य ज्योति हर दिल में जगाकर मठ की कीर्ति बढ़ाते रहेंगे
गुरु आज्ञा पर नतमस्तक हो साधना पथ पर बढ़ते रहेंगे
भ्रांति भंवर से बचानेवाले नाव को पार लगानेवाले
हम सब के गुरुराज की जय हो

